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St. Dominic.

(1170-1221.)

BY THE REV. WILFRID LESCHER, O.P.

It is of interest for English Catholics to know that St. Dominic was born in the year of St. Thomas of Canterbury's martyrdom, 1170. Once more, in the words of Tertullian, *Sanguis martyrum semen Christianorum*, "The blood of Martyrs is the seed of Christians." He belonged to the princely family of Guzman, settled at Calaroga, a Spanish town near the Pyrenees.

The noble lady who held him during baptism saw on his forehead a star of light, noticed also by his biographers in after years. At the age of fourteen he entered the schools at Palencia. His life there was solitary and frugal. He ate sparingly, and for ten years did not drink wine.

Both his parents were dead when he was ordained priest at the age of twenty-four, and at the request of his Bishop, soon after joined the Chapter of Reformed Canons of Osma, his native diocese. Although youngest in age, he was named Subprior. "Then," says Blessed Jordan, "he stood among his brethren as a shining light, first in holiness, but in his own opinion last of all, shedding around him a life-giving perfume. One thing he asked often and earnestly of God; it was

that He would give him a true charity, a love that would make it easy for him to give up all for the salvation of men, being convinced that only then would he be a true member of Christ, when he should consecrate himself with all his powers to win souls after the example of the Saviour of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our redemption." His aspiration even then was after a missionary life, "for," says Theodoric, "his love for perishing souls was a continual and painful wound in his heart, for God had given to him the gift of a perfect charity."

The Albigenses.

In 1203 Dominic went with Diego, Bishop of Osma, into France. As they crossed the Pyrenees and entered the province of Languedoc, they were confronted with the ravages of the Albigensian heretics.

Dominic's heart yearned over the land. He had been reared in solitude. Yet at once, as by instinct, the zeal of an Apostle flashed out. With a tact equal to his charity, he converted the innkeeper who gave them shelter, on the first night of his arrival. Later he told a friend that this first success had suggested to his mind on the spot, the idea of an Order of Preachers.

The fellow travellers passed through Languedoc, and visited Rome. They turned homeward, re-entered Languedoc, and were on the point of leaving it when a mere accident, as we might call it, arrested their steps. Pope Innocent III. had instigated a movement against the aggression of the Albigenses. Success had been slight, and the Catholics were at the moment in conference at Montpellier, deliberating on the gloomy out-look. They heard of Diego and Dominic passing through, and invited their counsel. Diego spoke with burning words to the Fathers and magnates, and declared his intention of remaining in the land, preaching the poverty of Christ. He was hailed as a leader of the Catholic mission.

All went well. Dominic followed his Bishop as a simple preacher. His zeal and name soon filled the land. Surprising it was to see the student, the recluse, the man of prayer, showing forth all the fire, and still more the prudence and charity of a perfect apostle. His manifestation had come. It was as if a torrent from the quiet hills had found at length its outlet.

The Albigenses were amazed and angered by this new resistance. Their pride was checked by humble men; their imperious conquests trembled. They took up with fresh fury the arts of deception; but in vain. At Fanjeaux occurred a celebrated prodigy. A public thesis written by Dominic was put to the ordeal by fire. The document written in opposition by the Albigenses was cast into the flames and consumed. Dominic's was thrown out of the fire three times unscathed. This miracle was noised abroad and converted many. It is sculptured in marble on the Saint's tomb at Bologna.

A little town by the Pyrenees, thirty miles from Toulouse, was the first place to receive the impress of his religious rule. Here he provided for the education of Catholic girls by founding a small convent of nuns.

A sudden storm of war both tested and sheltered this refuge created by the zeal of the great preacher. Diego died, the Catholic mission collapsed, and hostilities broke out between the Catholics and the Albigenses.

"St. Dominic," says Blessed Humbert, "left almost alone, with a few companions who were bound to him by no vow, during ten years upheld the Catholic faith in different parts of Narbonne, especially at Carcassonne and Fanjeaux. He devoted himself entirely to the salvation of souls by the ministry of preaching, and he bore with a great heart a multitude of affronts, ignominies and sufferings for the Name of Jesus Christ."

"It was necessary," says the chronicler, "that he who loved God so much should love men dearly. As a youth he sold his books and other things, and he wished to sell himself as a slave to ransom a Christian from the Moors. Nor was he less illustrious in con-

soling unhappy men and alleviating their lot than in teaching them the truth. For he desired nothing more ardently than to help them on the way to heaven. Thus he embraced in the widest charity all sorts of men, nobles and peasants, Jews and Pagans. He disputed with heretics, but nevertheless he admonished them cheerfully and mildly to embrace the Catholic Faith. In fine, he was so moved with pity towards the afflicted, that he ardently desired to save even those who were in hell, had it been possible."

To the Catholics he was all in all: they found in him their defence, their father, their guide. "The Catholics loved him," we are told; "liberal and hospitable, he shared what he had with the poor. He was very sparing to himself in food, but wished others to be supplied abundantly so far as their means allowed. I never knew a man so humble, or who held the world in greater contempt. He received abuse, curses, and reproaches not only patiently but with joy, as though they were precious gifts. No persecution troubled him; he went about serene and intrepid in the midst of danger, and never turned out of his way from fear. If on his journeys he was overcome by weariness, he would lie down by the roadside for a scanty rest. Never did I know a man so given to prayer, or who so abounded in tears. He was heard to cry out: 'O Lord, have mercy on this people. What will become of sinners?' The sins of others were a torment to him. He would pass sleepless nights weeping over sinners." Another says:—"Into the wide embrace of his charity he received all men, and as he loved all, so was he beloved by all. He made it his business to rejoice with those that rejoiced, and to weep with those that wept, and wholly to pour himself out in pity for the afflicted, and love of his neighbour. All were moreover attracted by the fact that he never showed the least duplicity or pretence, in word or work, but always walked in the ways of simplicity."

His mission grew. Fervent companions came and clung to him. First of these was the dearly loved

Blessed Bertrand, who was with him in all toils, and was called his living image. Another was Lawrence the Englishman, also called Blessed. The capacity and energy of Dominic were not overlooked. He filled several important offices. Thrice he was offered, but refused, the episcopate.

The Rosary.

This period of his life is bounded by two notable events, the murder of the Papal Legate, and the Battle of Muret. In the Breviary Office for Rosary Sunday, it is declared that, "he was admonished by the Blessed Virgin to preach the Rosary to the people as a singular remedy against heresy and sin." The Popes Leo X., St. Pius V., Gregory XIII., Sixtus V., Clement VIII., Alexander VII., Innocent XI., Clement XI., Innocent XIII., Benedict XIII., Pius IX., have, with a singular consent and in a most formal manner, attributed the Rosary to St. Dominic. Pope Leo XIII. has crowned the tradition by the words in his Encyclical Letter, dated September 22nd, 1891:—"The belief that to this form of prayer a special power has been accorded by the Queen of Heaven is justified, because by her instigation and under her patronage it was introduced by the holy Father Dominic, and it was spread in a time hostile to everything Catholic, much like our own, and as a powerful means of opposing the enemies of the Faith effectually."

It is easy to trace the Rosary to Dominic's mind and practice. He was emphatically the Apostle of vocal prayer. His own personal devotion was an example of ejaculatory prayer, akin to the Rosary method. His favourite prayer was the Our Father, over each syllable of which he lingered, especially at Mass. Next he loved the Hail Mary, "for indeed," says Castiglio, "no name after that of our Lord was so welcome to him as that sweet name of Mary, or so often on his lips." By the Rosary he renewed the love of Mary throughout the world. He never began an important work without

invoking her aid, and he left it to his brethren to do the same. One of his biographers adds, in words closely connected with this subject:—"There is a kind of prayer wherein the soul makes the body serve as an instrument of devotion, and this was often employed by the Blessed Dominic. The soul therein acts on the body, and the body reacts on the soul." The Rosary appears to be almost the spontaneous outcome of Dominic's interior spirit. The words of Pope Leo XIII. fitly prove its supernatural power:—"The sect of the heretical Albigenses had found its way secretly and publicly into many Provinces. This detestable offshoot of the Manicheans, whose numerous errors it revived, spread hypocrisy, murder, and a deadly hatred to the Church. Human help against these insidious audacious people was hardly to be expected, but the Rosary sent by God came to our aid by the power of the Blessed Virgin, the glorious destroyer of all heresies."

The Battle of Muret.

Count Raymund of Toulouse, the leader of the Albigenses, was among the smallest and meanest of the small and mean tyrants of the Middle Ages. His perjured banners sheltered hordes of lawless men, hired and fighting for pay and plunder. The words of Innocent III. fully bear out the vile character of Raymund and his followers:—"Suffer not the Church to perish," he wrote to the kings of England and France, "in this unhappy country, but come to her assistance and combat valiantly against these heretics, who are worse than Saracens."

At the head of the Catholics was Count Simon de Montfort, father of the De Montfort who founded the English House of Commons. He was in all respects the opposite of Raymund. He was a brave man, truthful and religious, a worthy leader in the true cause, a fit heir to the chivalry which rescued the Holy Sepulchre. Under these two leaders the war rolled on with varying

success, till the battle of Muret placed on De Montfort's brow the coronet of victory in 1213.

Beleagured in the town of Muret, De Montfort, with only 800 horse, suddenly, by an extraordinary inspiration, threw himself upon the foe, 40,000 strong, and at one impetuous charge, scattered them like chaff before the wind, losing only eight men. The king of Aragon, Raymund's ally and kinsman, was slain, and the enemy wasted away like the hosts of Sennacherib. No wonder that this victory was considered to be nothing less than a miracle. De Montfort attributed the result to the prayers of the Rosary, and out of gratitude he built the first chapel in its honour at Muret.

It is pleasant and significant to remember the friendship of Dominic when we think of the influence of De Montfort's family in English history. The younger Simon may well have derived the principles of constitutional liberty, for which he fought and died at Evesham, from the broad and free mind of Dominic, in whose legislation they are so conspicuous.

The Order of Friar Preachers.

Dominic was in his forty-sixth year. He had with him six companions. A citizen of Toulouse, Peter Cellani, gave himself and his house to the little company. "From the time they first resided at Toulouse," says Malvenda, "the Blessed Dominic and his companions began to conform themselves to religious rule, and to perfect themselves more and more in humility." They all adopted the habit of the Canons Regular. Fulk, Bishop of Toulouse, and De Montfort gave substantial gifts of lands and revenues to Dominic's design.

In 1215, for the second time, he was in Rome. The Lateran Council was in session, and he attended as the consultor to the Bishop of Toulouse. He submitted the plan of his Order to Pope Innocent III., who approved of it on condition that it should be based on one of the older Rules.

The memorable and touching meeting between Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi took place at this time. Falling on the neck of the Seraphic Patriarch, Dominic exclaimed, "Let us keep together, and no one shall prevail against us." Their kiss has joined the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in fraternal love ever since.

Dominic returned to Toulouse, and together with his brethren, chose the Rule of St. Augustine, the oldest in the Western Church, upon which to found the Order, as the Pope desired. The title of Friar Preacher, so exactly expressive of the new design, was conferred by Innocent III. himself, in a letter from Rome, and Dominic at once adopted it.

On the way to Rome for the third time, the news reached him that Innocent III. was dead. This was indeed a severe blow to his hopes. He journeyed on to find Honorius III. filling the Chair of St. Peter. The new Pope at once took up the plan of the Order, bequeathed to him by Innocent, and gave it his formal approbation in two Bulls, the second of which is a summary of the first, and runs as follows:—

HONORIUS, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God, to our dear son Dominic, Prior of St. Romain, at Toulouse, and to your brethren, who have made or shall make profession of regular life, health and the apostolic benediction. We, considering that the brethren of your Order will be the champions of the Faith, and true lights of the world, do confirm the Order in all its lands and possessions, present and to come; and we take the Order itself, with all its goods and rights, under our protection and government. Given at Santa Sabina, Rome, the first year of our Pontificate.

HONORIUS.

As if in ratification of the decree given by Christ's Vicar on earth, Dominic received a vision of heavenly strength and consolation. One night as he was praying in the Vatican Basilica, St. Peter and St. Paul appeared

to him, the former giving him a staff, and the latter a book, with the words, "Go and preach, for to this ministry thou art called." As the vision faded from his gaze, he seemed to behold his brethren going forth, two and two, preaching the word to all nations. It is added by some writers that the Holy Ghost rested on his head in the form of a fiery tongue, that he was confirmed in grace, and freed from many temptations. From that time he carried a staff, with the Book of the Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles.

Thus fully authorized and equipped for his great and world-wide mission, he turned again towards Toulouse. Before leaving Rome, he made his formal profession, as the first Friar Preacher, in the hands of Pope Honorius.

Dominic had been styled during former years Prior of Prouille. The title was replaced by that of Prior of St. Romain, when Fulk gave him the church of that name at Toulouse.

The little company had not been idle in their Father's absence. A complete observance had been set up, and their number had grown from six to sixteen. They were sheltered by a lowly cloister adjoining the church of St. Romain.

It was in May, 1217, that Dominic promulgated to them the Bull of Confirmation. "Our Order is known to have been instituted from the beginning, for preaching and the salvation of souls."

These words from the Dominican Constitutions express the master-thought of Dominic. From this he never swerved. The perfection of the Christian Priesthood was the means he sought to that end, and with nothing less would he be satisfied. That perfection he found clearly in the life and in the words of our Divine Lord. Without doubt he wished to transcribe his Rule from the Gospel. There he found the Divine words, "Do not possess gold nor silver, nor money in your purses. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way." The union of the Priesthood with the life of the Counsels was no new thing.

Grave theologians think that the Apostles took vows of religion. (St. Thomas 2-2 88. 4. ad 3.)

Dominic adopted a further element of free service. Permission is not required to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty. Neither is it wanted to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful. These works of mercy are open to all. The Order of Friar Preachers was an Order of authorized and commissioned Preachers. It was also an Order of Brothers, doing a lay work and near to the people, in fact, inseparably connected with their daily hopes, fears, and joys.

The religious life came from the lips of Christ, and stands by His authority. The way of the Counsels is open to the soul as the path of its highest liberty. No man's leave need be asked to follow Christ.

St. Stephen Harding, Founder of the Cistercian Order, had in 1166 introduced the General Chapter as an executive and moderating power in the old rules binding under sin. Dominic gave the General Chapter legislative powers. He added that the Rule should not bind under sin, except in the essential vows. In these two points he innovated on the prevalent monastic system. Subsequent Orders have copied these two principles. In many ways, chiefly when common property was introduced, has the Order tested and proved the wisdom which devised its mode of government.

St. Dominic is the Patriarch of the active Orders. The barbarians who trampled on the stones of Rome, the Saxons, the Celts, the Franks, were won to Christ by monks given by rule to solitude and silence. A systematic course of sustained action was now demanded. The following passage from the *Life of St. Richard of Chichester* draws out the old and the new mode in their relation and contrast:—"Farming in all its branches was the order of the day among the Cistercians; if they quitted the Abbey gates, it was on horseback on their way to some grange belonging to the monastery; there were granaries and stables in plenty, for the monks

lived on the produce of their farms. But among the Black Friars, those who issued from the house, went forth on foot to preach in the open air, at the foot of a cross, in some lonely outlying parish, or else in the cathedral of some town which contained a university. Some even might be seen taking their departure for distant lands to preach the Gospel to the Saracen or the Tartar. . . . Instead of the hoe, the plough, and the reaping hook, the tools of the Dominican were the pen, the ink-horn, and the copy-book, the book of the Sentences (later the *Summa*), and the Bible. In the school of the Novices were going on Latin Grammar and Logic, and the sound of disputations might be heard in the cloister. This was all very unlike the houses of St. Bernard. But the spiritual and inward life of the two Orders was the same. There was the same love for meditation in both Orders. At every turn of his busy life, whether trudging along the road in his vocation as preacher, or walking in his black mantle in the convent garden; whether on his knees in the church of his house at home, or in some distant land with Turks and heathen about him, the Friar was to be ever meditating on the great mysteries of the Faith."

One peculiar feature stands out in Dominic's Rule—that of dispensation. It occupies a singular position, and, properly understood, may be called truly the crown and master-piece of his legislation. This principle has, in a great degree, enabled the Order to bend itself to needs, and to preserve its unity. It is not a legislative, but an excutive, discretion. It combines in one law and fact, and makes the Rule a life. It is also a perfect instrument of the ascetic spirit, entailing a surrender at all times of small views and low aims. It is dispensation indeed, and not Rule. But in that light, Dominic insisted on it, and the Order has ever formally retained it.

On the Feast of the Assumption, 1217, the brethren all made their profession in the hands of Dominic. Two were to remain at Prouille, and two at Toulouse. Seven were sent to Paris, and four to Spain. Dominic

himself, with one companion, set out to reside in Rome.

The surprise and remonstrance which, we are told, arose from this sudden dispersion, had a plain cause. It was not, as some suppose, the youth or ignorance of his brethren. Five out of his sixteen companions had been priests for several years. Four others were men of worldly experience, probably also priests then. Some of these, like the Founder, must have been ripe and learned men in the fullest sense of the term. Further, many of them had long enjoyed his own personal guidance. Few founders indeed had started with so rich a store of trained disciples. The surprise came from a deeper source, and was natural and just from many points of view. Dominic had restored Languedoc, and yet here he was at the very turn and restitution of affairs, leaving the country. He had raised his Order in the Province; it had grown out of the special circumstances of the land. At the moment his work began, it was torn from its parent soil, and Languedoc was again left exposed to the foe. De Montfort and Fulk saw the danger. For he was not only encouraging his enemies; he was alienating his friends.

No event in Dominic's life more displays his deep sagacity than this dispersion. Events proved his foresight. He had by his long labours drawn out all the good there was in Languedoc, and it hardly made more than an equipoise against heresy. The country was exhausted; the deep evil required a deeper remedy. He saw that the Catholic fabric of success was slight. When, soon after, De Montfort died, the war was rekindled, the heretics discovered his far-seeing wisdom. They found themselves confronted by no local foe, but outflanked by a universal opposition. Peace was restored when the sovereignty of Toulouse was merged in that of the French Crown on the head of St. Louis.

Dominic left Languedoc. What had been his work there? Briefly, he had saved the West of Europe from becoming stamped after the image of the East.

In his day, the fifth Crusade was inaugurated under

Innocent III. It was followed by the sixth, under Honorius III. Both were half-hearted expeditions. Then ensued a strange compromise and friendship between the Christians and the Saracens. The Emperor Fredrick II., who led the sixth Crusade, tried to cement this fatal peace into an alliance. He spoke of his "friend the Sultan." He wished to plant Mahometanism in Europe, but he found it had no root: the root had been cut off by St. Dominic. St. Pius V. completed his work, when the Turkish wrecks were scattered upon the waves of Lepanto.

By reason therefore of the evil which he had prevented, Dominic deserves, in the words of Balmez, that a statue should be erected to his memory, as to one who had, at least, deserved well of civilization. When, three centuries later, the stroke of the Reformation fell upon Europe, through his action it shaped events, not after its parent "the spectral East," but in the modified form of heresy and schism.

Journeys of St. Dominic.

Dominic left for Rome in October, 1217. His journeys, as an essential part of his apostolate, deserve a description. Four times he had crossed the Alps Yet little is recorded of his wayfaring trials. He went along with the heart of an Apostle, with a single eye to those multitudinous souls "sitting by the wayside begging," who had perhaps small chance of instruction except what they might obtain from passing preachers such as he. He made his apostolic journeys serve apostolic needs. Not only the beginning and the end, but the progress of his journey yielded fruit. "With all his strength," says Blessed Jordan, "and with ardent zeal he sought to win souls to Christ without any exception, and as many as he could, and this zeal was marvellously, and in a way not to be expressed, rooted in his very heart." He thought of the faithful, his heart was with the heathen in the furthest seas, he angled for the capture of heretics, and he did not forget the crowd

of outlying souls who were, in a special sense, the object of the mendicant and missionary Brother. "He preached," we are told, "by night and by day, in houses, in the fields, and by the roadside." "He was most assiduous in preaching," says an early disciple, "and his words were so touching that he often incited himself and hearers to tears, nor did I ever hear any man with such power to touch the heart with compunction."

The light in which he regarded these journeys is shown by his strict rule of life. "The Blessed Dominic," says the chronicler, "the firm guardian of observance, did not remit anything of the monastic life during his frequent apostolic journeys. He said Mass daily if possible, and in the middle of Mass preached a sermon. He recited the Office by day and night at the proper hours, and kept the silence according to rule, and sending his companions apart, he nourished his soul with pious meditations on Christ our Lord. He slept on straw, and oftener on the bare ground; the fasts of the Order he never broke either through fatigue or illness; he sought hospitality wherever it might be hardest, and often fed his hosts, who were heretics, with the Word of the Spirit as he was fed in the flesh." His glowing thoughts found ready utterance:—"Filled with the sacred fire of charity," says Theodoric, "he went about preaching everywhere the Word of God; visiting the poor, consoling the afflicted, and healing the sick. The tenderness of his heart made him all charity to his neighbour, all compassion for the unfortunate. Everything had the power of touching his heart, but it was, above all, the sins of men which consumed him with grief and pity. So that when he approached any town or village, and beheld it from afar, he would melt into tears as he thought of the misery of its inhabitants." Blessed Jordan says, "one of his maxims was, that we should give the day to our neighbour, and the night to God. By day no one was more accessible and cheerful to his brethren, by night no one more watchful in prayer." In short, to quote the words of St. Catherine of Siena: "He took on him the Office of the Word, the

only begotten Son of God, and appeared in the world as an apostle, scattering the darkness of error and giving light."

Personal Appearance.

An ancient tradition, cherished in the Order, has preserved the idea that in visage St. Dominic resembled our Lord. These words of Sister Cecilia have therefore all the deeper interest:—"He was about the middle height and slightly made: his face beautiful and somewhat ruddy, his hair and beard fair, and his eyes very fine. From his forehead and between his brows there shone a light, which drew forth reverence and love from the beholders. He was ever joyous and cheerful, except when stirred to pity by the affliction of others, His hands were long and beautiful, and his voice was clear noble, and melodious. He was never bald, and he always preserved his religious tonsure perfect, mingled with a few gray hairs." "His forehead," relates another, "was broad and majestic, and his eyes had a singular beauty of expression and kindness in them." The charm of his manner agreed with this gracious aspect. He had indeed no sympathy with a morose face and a harsh rule. He was, among the Saints, the illustrious exponent of the Divine words, "When you fast be not as the hypocrites, sad" (St. Matt. vi.). As an index of his bearing to others, these words from the Constitutions of the Order are in point: "Excessive austerity in counsels and opinions impedes the salvation of souls, for men are terrified thereby to such a degree that they neglect their salvation. Wherefore as far as possible, severity and austerity in counsels should be relaxed, and men are to be treated with benignity, and we must try in those things which are not reprehensible to make ourselves agreeable to men, and to deal with them kindly and pleasantly."

The charity of this great apostle was founded in humility. "Never did I see a man so humble," says a witness. He was a brother to his brethren. He often

exclaimed, "O Lord have mercy; what will become of sinners?" He said to his disciples, "If you have not your own sins to weep over, think of the multitude of unhappy souls who need mercy, over whom our Lord Jesus Christ wept, and of whom the Prophet David said, 'I have beheld sinners, and I have withered away with sorrow.'" From this zeal and lowliness of heart came a singular gift of consolation. "He was," says one, "the sovereign consoler of his brethren."

Dominic passed through the world like a stream of light. The gift of illumination was pre-eminently his. It is difficult to measure now his influence upon those who knew and saw him. From all accounts, they looked up to him as an extraordinary personage, and their language seems unequal to pass on the impression they received. Wherever he went, the intellect seemed to be reconciled to Christian truth, and men took up willingly the hardest tasks. "Penance is a pleasure when preached by Master Dominic," was a saying current in his great Languedoc days. This gift of persuasion was transfigured throughout, by that "serene wisdom," that childlike innocence, that sweet and unearthly spirit which, at its best, has made a place to itself of unrivalled beauty in Dominic's life and works, and in the annals of his Order.

St. Sixtus.

Dominic with his companion, Stephen of Metz, entered Rome in 1218, and, at the Pope's desire, took possession of the Church of St. Sixtus. Here the Order in his person settled in its centre, and at once began to expand. In three months he had given the habit to more than a hundred novices.

Dominic was known to the Pope and to the Papal Court, and to some degree among the people. His fame, his great works, his sanctity preceded him. His greatest miracles were wrought now, and confirmed the popular veneration. He raised to life three dead persons. One was a little child restored to its mother,

and another was a workman killed by falling from a ladder. The third and most famous of of all his miracles, was the raising of the young man Napoleon, who was thrown from horseback and killed on the spot. The mangled body was laid before the Blessed Father in the Chapter Room, as he sat in conference with some of the Cardinals, one of whom was the uncle of the young man. Saying no word, Dominic prepared at once to celebrate Mass. At the Elevation, he was raised above the ground in ecstasy. When the Holy Sacrifice was over, clad in the sacred vestments, he approached the dead body and cried out, "Young man Napoleon, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I say to thee, arise." The limbs, to the wonder of all, moved, and the spirit returned to the fleshly frame. It is needless to say that the veneration of the city towards the holy patriarch was confirmed by these incomparable prodigies. The only effect upon himself was that his own life became more austere. "After the confirmation of his Order," says the chronicler, "he passed nights almost sleepless in the church; and at one time kneeling, then wholly prostrate on the ground he prayed; and if a drowsiness came over his tired limbs, either leaning on the altar standing, or on a hard stone reclining, he rested awhile. Every night he disciplined himself to blood with an iron chain. His gift of tears was copious, especially when saying Mass. He rejoiced in nothing so much as in his own contempt; and ever preserved perfect purity of body and soul."

The following description of Dominic as a religious Superior applies to this period:—"The Blessed Dominic ruled his Order with so much prudence and love that it was difficult which the more to admire, his care for religious observance or his practice of meekness and kindness. Zeal for justice raised him against vice, yet in such a manner as to unite him to the offender by the tie of benignity and love. He overlooked faults in a brother, till he saw him prepared to receive correction in peace and humility, lest the spirit should be bruised by inopportune reproof. Daily, if possible, he gave an

instruction to the brethren on religious discipline. The sorrows and trials of others drew from him so sweet a sympathy that he soothed every sadness by so great affection."

In time, increasing numbers suggested other foundations. The first chosen was Bologna, a great legal and university centre. The beloved Bertrand was made the first superior there.

Meanwhile Rome was filled with the name and veneration of Dominic. The people "followed him wherever he went, as though he were an angel, cutting off pieces of his habit to keep as relics."

Santa Sabina.

It was a happy coincidence that the Pope's Bull of Confirmation should have been dated from Santa Sabina, a name inseparably linked with that of Dominic.*

St. Sixtus was, after a while, given up to nuns, who took the Rule established at Prouille. Dominic with his brethren moved to Santa Sabina on the Aventine. An old church stood there, adjoining to which was the Pontifical Palace.

The position which Dominic occupied in so close a relation to the Pontifical Court is not easy to understand. At all events he was in the very centre of activity and observation. He soon made his influence felt in that cause always near his heart. To provide for the occupation of the Cardinals' domestics, idly tarrying in the Papal ante-chambers, he began a lectureship in St. Paul's Epistles. This grew into a permanent office, the holder of which is called the Master of the Sacred Palace, always a Dominican.

* St. Sabina was a rich widow lady of high birth in Umbria. She had a Christian servant named Seraphia, a Syrian, whose virtue touched her heart and led her to the Faith, and whose name became illustrious as a martyr. Sabina also was martyred in Rome under Adrian. Her feast is on August 29th. The church on the Aventine was dedicated in honour of both saints, but at present bears the name of St. Sabina.

Dominic also taught in the public schools, and both students and prelates listened to him and gave him the title of "Master." It is conjectured that from this office the University of Rome took its rise. He preached often, especially in St. Peter's.

The date when the Popes left the Aventine is unknown. Meanwhile, Dominic had free scope in the consolidation of his Order. His chief energies were given to the brethren, who in the autumn of his life fell upon his path with the plentifulness of autumn leaves, but not with their decay. No, the seeds sown in Languedoc, along the highways of France and Italy, that had lain long in the cold earth scourged by the rains and storms of sharp seasons, now blossomed forth in hues of manifold beauty. But his heart was, as ever, fixed on God. His thoughts were in the courts of the blessed, now that he was exalted, even as when he was "the reproach of the rich and the contempt of the proud."

The Aventine Hill retains one memory, that of Dominic. His footprints are yet distinct there, covered as they are with the dust of well-nigh seven centuries. In the garden flourishes the orange tree planted by his own hand. The Chapter-room remains, wherein he gave the habit to St. Hyacinth, the Apostle of the North, and to his brother, Blessed Ceslas.

The rapid growth of the Order was marked by a memorable change in the habit. Through a vision of Our Blessed Lady, granted to the Blessed Reginald, the white scapular was substituted for the Canon Regulars' linen rochet.

The foundation of the Third Order took place about this time; Dominic established it as a military society for the defence of Catholic interests, and named it the *Militia of Jesus Christ*. It was thus sanctioned by Honorius III. The members wore a white tunic and a black mantle, on which was displayed the Cross of the Order.* After the Saint's death, Gregory IX. changed

* The heraldic Cross of the order is thus blazoned :—Gyronny of eight argent and sable, a cross patoncé between four mullets of six points all countercnanged.

its name to *Order of Penance of St. Dominic*, and with time the military duties were dropped. St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine of Ricci, St. Rose of Lima, are the three canonized Saints of the Third Order.

Many legends, both of angels and demons, cluster round Dominic at Santa Sabina. The attacks of the great enemy of souls are futile and frivolous, and often ridiculous. They are like the spent stones of a defeated foe. On the other hand, the intervention and help of friendly Angels were never more lovingly displayed.

"It was the constant habit of the venerable Father," says a biographer, "to spend the whole day in winning souls by continual preaching, or by hearing confessions, or in other works of charity." The Founder and Master-General of the Order did not excuse himself from preaching. By such active works as these did he write his Rule upon his living flesh, before it appeared on paper. A written Rule is not a help but a hindrance, if it be written too soon. Dominic believed in life first, in codes second. With a tact truly spiritual did he build up and set stone on stone in that edifice which he desired above all to be a living organization. His apostolic journeys were not relaxed. He frequently made excursions in aid of souls, preaching with ever-quickening zeal.

In 1218 he set out on his last long journey. He visited Toulouse once more. Then he crossed to Spain, which he had not seen since leaving it with Diego. There he spent several months, and made foundations at Segovia, Madrid, and Sargossa. He is traced at Palencia by words in the will of Antony Sers, who leaves a bequest to the Rosary Confraternity "founded by the good Dominic Guzman." He then recrossed the Pyrenees and visited Paris, founding six houses from that city. Thence he returned to Italy, and took up his residence at Bologna.

Bologna.

Reginald was sent to Paris, and Dominic assumed the government of the Convent at Bologna. "He found at the Convent of St. Nicholas," says Blessed Jordan, "a large community of brethren, who were being carefully trained under the discipline of Reginald. They all received him with joy, and shewed him reverence as their Father, and he, living with them, formed the yet young and tender family by his teaching and example."

A General Chapter was now arranged. In view of the event, the Pope conferred on Dominic the formal title of Master-General. The Chapter was convened at Bologna, on the Feast of Pentecost, 1220.

Dominic offered the resignation of his office at the Chapter. His zeal for souls grew with age, and he desired to be free, so that he might preach to the Tartars. The Fathers, however, would not consent to his abdication. Thus confirmed in authority, he gave only a still more perfect example. "Placed over the brethren as Master," says Theodoric, "he was noted only for a deeper humility and a more exact austerity." To others he never failed to make the Rule sweet. "Never," we are told, "did Blessed Dominic cause bitterness in any brother's heart; he never irritated them by word or deed; for indeed, nothing bitter could flow from such a spring of charity. His heart was so large towards others, that he looked to their bodily wants with the utmost tenderness; not only giving the frugal fare by Rule, but often better food lest the young should be discouraged, or the older yield to infirmity. Thus condescending to all, even in correcting his severity was mingled with compassion. When he laughed, as he did sometimes, his laughter came from the same spirit of sweetness and simplicity. For he was, above all things, true and simple; and to such a character, laughter is not unsuitable. All therefore rejoiced at his presence, and his delightful conversation

made all privations supportable, and every hardship sweet."

In December, 1220, he was seen in Rome, for the last time. Then he bade farewell to Santa Sabina. His memory is there perpetually, and every corner of the Aventine breathes forth the perfume of his name. His well remembered cell is now a chapel, and in it is the following inscription:—*Attende advena, hic olim sanctissimi viri Dominicus, Franciscus, et Angelus Carmelita in divinis colloquiis vigiles pernoctarunt.* (Hearken, stranger! on this spot it was that of yore the most holy men Dominic, Francis, and Angelus the Carmelite, spent the night in celestial colloquy.)

Dominic returned to Bologna for the second General Chapter in 1221, when the Order was divided into eight provinces, Spain, France, Provence, Lombardy, Rome, Germany, Hungary, and England. There were at that time sixty convents.

A remarkable distinction was conferred on Dominic after the Chapter by the city of Bologna. The magistrates formally presented him with the freedom of the city, to descend to his successors. The official document declares that the motives for the act are the Saint's learning, his great actions, his position as Founder of the Order, and his noble birth. This political esteem, as it may be styled, was shared by the brethren at that period in other places. "Many of these cities," says the chronicler, "deliver their statutes to the friars, to be changed and amended as they think good."*

About this time, Dominic received a novice who became famous as St. Peter Martyr, who died for the Faith, writing *Credo* with his ebbing blood. Wonderful to say, his assassin, Carino de Balsamo, was converted, entered the Order, and died forty years later, after a life of rigid penance, which earned for him the title of *il beato*.

* It is worthy of notice that Mr. Ruskin, in his *Stones of Venice*, dates the decline of Venice from the time the clergy lost political power.

Dominic did not fail to infuse his apostolic spirit into his brethren. "The first brethren of the Order," says the chronicler, "journeyed on the roads, scattering the seed of the Divine word. Every member seemed changed into a tongue, for everything about them preached penance and holiness."

The Saint's Death.

The Chapter over, Dominic visited the North of Italy, preaching. The shadow, or rather the halo of death was on his brow. His vigorous frame had bent under illness the previous year, and signs of the end were not wanting. Yet few if any of his brethren and friends realized that he was parting with them, that the wonderful life of incessant activity and austerity, was soon to close. "Having reached to perfect sancity," says Theodoric, "our Blessed Father St. Dominic received the gift of prophecy from our Lord, who made known to him the hour of death. As he prayed one night, consumed with the desire of appearing before God, he saw a beautiful youth who said, "Come my beloved, and enter into joy." Before leaving Bologna, he had said to some friends, "You see me now in health, dear friends; know that before the Feast of the Assumption, I shall have left this world and be with God."

Attacked by fever he returned to Bologna, preaching all the way from Venice, the last words uttered by his apostolic voice. On arrival, he attended Matins, and then succumbed to the violence of the malady. "He consoled and exhorted the brethren," says Ventura, "with sweet words and a smile; and all the time he was ill, he never complained nor did he utter a groan, but was cheerful and joyous." At his own request, he was laid on a piece of sacking stretched along the ground. Having received the last Sacraments he said to those around him: "Dearest brethren, by the singular gift of God, perfect virginity has been preserved to me up to this hour: which, if you also guard it

jealously, you will wonderfully prevail among the people by purity of life and the odour of a good name." Then he continued:—"Go on fervently in the service of our Lord, and extend the Order now only beginning. To serve God you know is to reign, but we must serve Him with our whole heart. Be firm in a good life, be faithful to the Rule, and grow in virtue. Behold, my sons, what I give you as a heritage; have charity, guard humility, and find your treasure in voluntary poverty." A short time he was silent, and it is believed, that in those moments our Lady appeared to him, and promised her perpetual protection to his Order. Ventura, his confessor said to him:—"Dear Father, you leave us desolate and afflicted; remember us before God." The Saint raised his failing hands and eyes and said:—"Holy Father, as by Thy mercy I have always done Thy Will, and have kept those Thou didst give me, I commend them now to Thee. Keep them, preserve them." Then fixing on them his last loving glance, he uttered the memorable promise, never forgotten:—"Do not weep, my children; I shall be of more help to you where I am going, than I have been in this life."

The cloud of death crept over that starry brow. It was noon, 6th August, 1221. He was fifty years of age. Suddenly and simply ended his career on earth.

The blow of so great a loss seemed at first to stun the brethren. They stood for a long time silent, weeping. "They had reason to mourn," says Castiglio, "at the loss of their father, pastor, and friend, given them by God. He had been their refuge in trouble, their resource, ready ever to console, with words of counsel or compassion, those who had left all things for the love of God."

Cardinal Ugolino, the Saint's constant friend, came from Venice to conduct the obsequies, in presence of many Bishops and Prelates, and a great multitude of people.

Albert, Prior of the Carmelites, came forward in tears to embrace the body of his friend. As he turned away, his face shone with joy. "Dear Father," he said to the

Prior of St. Nicholas, "rejoice with me. The Blessed Father has told me that we shall be re-united soon." And the event proved the words, for he died the same year. Dominic's first tomb was built of strong substance in the Church of St. Nicholas, "and there," says the chronicler, "was laid to rest this treasure more precious than gold, purer than silver, and nobler than all imaginable jewels."

Supernatural signs were not wanting of the Saint's beatitude. A cleric of Bologna, in a dream, saw the Blessed Father on a throne gloriously crowned, and said. "Are not you Brother Dominic lately dead?" "My son," replied the Saint, "I am not dead, for I have a good Master with whom I live." A brother of Santa Sabina seemed to see the road stretching from Bologna, and along it was walking Dominic between two men of venerable aspect, and he was crowned with a golden coronet and was dazzling with light. A sweet perfume emanated from the tomb. Miracles speedily occurred. Soon his place of burial was covered with grateful offerings.

The body was translated to a more fitting shrine under Blessed Jordan. Cardinal Ugolino was then Pope, by the title of Gregory IX. Not being able to attend the translation, he deputed the Archbishop of Ravenna in his place. Three hundred of the brethern assisted at the ceremony.

St. Dominic was canonized by Gregory IX. on the 13th July, 1234, at Rieti. With what feelings of veneration, added to a friend's joy, the Pope performed the act, so fittingly reserved for him, may be gathered from his words to the Cardinals: "I have no more doubt of the sanctity of this man, than I have of that of St. Peter and St. Paul."

The body was again translated to a richer tomb in 1267. The present marble shrine was erected in 1469, by Nicholas Pisano, and is justly praised as the sculptor's masterpiece. "As you behold this tomb," says Père Lacordaire, "you feel that the artist was divinely guided to express the sanctity of him whose dust it covers."

St. Dominic left some writings, but they have perished. They comprised a Commentary on St. Paul and St. Matthew, a treatise on the Rosary and on the Holy Eucharist. His book tried by fire at Fanjeaux, is said to have been a treatise on the "Flesh of Christ," and to have contained a luminous defence of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady, founded on the argument, "As the first Adam was made of virgin earth which had never been cursed, so was it fitting that the second Adam should be made in like manner."

The Order in England.

The Province of England was erected at the second General Chapter, 1221. Gilbert de Fresnoy, with twelve companions, founded the first house at Oxford, on a site occupied by the present gasworks, near the river. The church was dedicated to St. Nicholas, no doubt in memory of Bologna. The buildings in time occupied three acres of land. Among the famous men connected with this first English Priory were Robert Bacon, Bromyard, Claypole, Holcot, Fishacre, Kilwarby, Cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury, Trivet, the historian. Walter Malclerk, Bishop of Carlisle and Lord High Treasurer, abandoned his dignities and joined the Order, an example followed by other Prelates. Simon de Bouil, Prior, was Chancellor of the University in 1238, In eighteen years there were fifteen houses in England; in 1277 there were forty. There was one Convent of Nuns at Dartford, engaged in teaching. At the dissolution, there were fifty-two houses, the greater number founded by kings or the nobility. Among the English Saints, St. Richard of Chichester is thought by some to have belonged to the Order—at least he was joined to it in heart and spirit, as the following passage proves, from an ancient life by Friar Ralph:—"O Richard, servant of Christ, think upon the condition of life to which, in earlier days, thou didst propose to bind thyself by vow; and though God ordered it otherwise, and thou couldst not accomplish thy wish, yet rejoice

now, for thou hast obtained grace virtually to fulfil thine intention. Dost thou ask what life I mean? I answer the life of a preaching Friar."

Among the literary remains of the old English Dominicans, may be mentioned the famous "Ancren Riwle."

The Province, ruined and dispersed, in the sixteenth century, was restored in the seventeenth century by Cardinal Howard, who died in 1690.

The Mission of the Order.

Thirteen canonized Saints adorn the Order of Preachers:—St. Hyacinth, St. Peter Martyr, St. Raymund, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Antoninus, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Lewis Bertrand, St. Pius V., St. John of Gorcum, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Agnes, St. Catherine of Ricci, St. Rose of Lima. Among the innumerable Blessed may be named Blessed Reginald, Blessed Albert the Great, Blessed Henry Suso.

The first and one of the greatest works in the Order's public mission was the foundation of the Scholastic Philosophy and Theology. St. Thomas was the instrument of this vast enterprise. In the words of Cardinal Newman, "It was the magnificent aim of the children of St. Dominic to form the whole matter of human knowledge into one harmonious system, to secure the alliance between religion and philosophy, and to train men to the use of the gifts of nature in the sunlight of divine grace and revealed truth." It was the mission of Fra Angelico, the Dominican artist, to carry the purest lines of truth into manifestation before the eye.

These significations of its high and spiritual mind render just the title of the Friar Preachers to be the Order of Christian Genius. Its culture was moulded in that ancient profound form based on theology, which a Protestant author has noticed to have produced its refining effect in the best times of Constantinople.*

* "When the Christian Religion became universal, it gradually directed the whole attention of the educated to theological ques-

The Dominican Order is, in history, the great University Order. Its method of teaching stands out in contrast to the old monastic schools, which in some respects were simply nurseries, and in contrast also to the modern single College. It created or animated those institutions which dot mediæval Europe like gems of splendour.

No Order, formally as such, has been so closely identified with the government of the Church. This fact is in itself ample testimony to the wisdom, moderation, and equity of the Dominican character.

The missionary zeal of the Order is proved by the astonishing yet well-attested fact that in the first century of its existence its martyrs numbered over 12,000.

The Order has given four Popes to the Church: Innocent IV., Blessed Benedict XI., St. Pius V., Benedict XIII.

From the record of his life, even the cursory reader will gather the impression that St. Dominic was a man of conspicuous and eminent talent. He was probably one of the greatest orators that ever lived. The gifts of a lawgiver and of a statesman were also displayed to a high degree in the rise and organization of his Order.

St. Dominic is one of the celebrated figures in the story of the world. He is one of the great Saints in the Church of God. His life is a spiritual and intellectual landmark dividing ages.

Let us end these pages with the beautiful anthem of the church, sung daily in Dominican churches throughout the world:

"O Light of the Church, Doctor of Truth, Rose of Patience, Ivory of Chastity, thou didst give the water of wisdom freely: Preacher of grace, join us to the Blessed."

tions. These studies certainly exercised a favourable influence on the general morality of mankind, and the tone of society was characterized by a purity of manners and a degree of charitable feeling which have probably never been surpassed." Quoted by Fr. Faber.

THE HOLY ANGELS

"He hath given His Angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways."—*Psalm* xc. 11

THE following pages contain a brief outline of Catholic teaching on the Angels. An acquaintance with the doctrine of the Church on this point cannot fail to prove useful at a time when many are proclaiming, far and wide, their disbelief in everything that lies beyond the region of sense; while others are coveting and striving to enter into undue, unlawful, and unholy communion with the spirit-world.

It is true that we cannot with human eyes see the Angels as they really are, for they are spirits, but they have, at times, assumed bodies, and appeared to men, when the beauty of this their outward seeming, bringing to the mind all that is pure, bright and holy, has testified to their innate glory, dignity, power and splendour. Thus, the prophet Daniel describes the Angel that stood before him: "And I lifted up my eyes, and I saw: and behold a man clothed in linen, and his loins were girded with the finest gold: and his body was like the chrysolite, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as a burning lamp: and his arms, and all downward, even to the feet, like in appearance to glittering brass: and the voice of his word like the voice of a multitude." Meditation and reflection on the presence of the holy Angels will counteract that tendency which there is in the heart of man to fix his thoughts and desires on what is of the earth earthly, ever to cling to the fleeting and changeable, and lead him to contemplate, love, and hope for what belongs to his spiritual nature, that "life that knows no death." When we think of these heavenly spirits we are reminded too of our Father's love, who has sent His Angels to guide and guard us in our battle with the enemies of our salvation.

1. The Name "Angel."

The name "Angel," in its widest meaning, is applied to all those spirits whom God has created without destining them, as our souls, to union with a body. The complete spiritual substances—to use the language of scholastics—had their virtue tried, and some of them revolted against their Creator, and were cast into hell. These are the demons or fallen Angels. Others remained faithful to God, Who confirmed them in grace, and bestowed upon them the glory and happiness of heaven. These are the good Angels, these bright and holy spirits who stand round about the throne of God, offering praise, honour, and benediction for ever and ever to the Lamb that was slain.

The name most frequently given to the Angels is "messenger": in Hebrew, mal'ak, in Greek ἄγγελος, which is rendered in the Vulgate by *angelus*, and sometimes by *nuntius*, *legatus*. Like "Apostle," it is a name denoting an office, not a nature. Thus St. Augustine says: "You ask the name of this nature: it is spirit; you seek to know its office: it is an Angel." The name Angel is also applied to men: to priests,[1] to prophets,[2] to bishops,[3] to St. John the Baptist,[4] even to Christ and the Holy Ghost in as far as they are sent of God. The good Angels are also called the Sons of God, saints, dwellers in heaven, the army of heaven. Only three Angels have proper names assigned them in the sacred writings, Gabriel ("God is strength"), Michael ("who is as God?"), Raphael ("God healeth").[5] Other names are uncertain, and were rejected by Pope Zachary at the Roman Synod, in 745, and later on again at the Synod of Aix-la-Chapelle.

2. The Existence of the Angels.

The belief in the existence of Angels flourished among the Jews before and after the Mosaic dispensation, consequently it could not have been derived from the Chaldees or Persians, for the Pentateuch was written before the Babylonian Captivity. Therefore, among the Jews, the error of the Sadducees, who denied that there were Angels,

[1] Malach. ii. 7. [2] 2 Paralip. xxxvi. 15; Agg. i. 13.
[3] Apoc. i. 20. [4] St. Matt. xi. 10.
[5] Dan. viii. 16, x. 13, 21; Tob. iii. 25.

was remarkable. Among Christians, up to the time of the Anabaptists and certain Socinians, the existence of Angels was scarcely even called in question. Protestants, however, through their denial of the invocation of the saints, frequently forget the presence of the Angels, so that not without reason, perhaps, wrote the Anglican bishop Hall: "The good Lord forgive me, for that among my other offences I have suffered myself so much to forget as His divine presence, so this presence of His holy Angels." Many rationalists, in accordance with their tenets, interpret angelic actions as purely natural events.

The Catholic doctrine upon the existence and nature of the Angels has been formulated for us by the Fourth Council of Lateran, 1215, and the Council of the Vatican, 1870, which affirm the existence and complete spirituality of these creatures of God. This doctrine is fully confirmed by Holy Scripture. In the early books of the Old Testament, Angels frequently appear. When God drove Adam from Paradise, he placed before its gates the Cherubim. An Angel stands before Agar in the desert, and addresses her: two Angels come to Sodom and deliver Lot; Jacob, in his dream, sees the Angels ascending and descending by a ladder that rose from earth to heaven. An Angel appears to Balaam; an Angel, sword in hand, promises to help Josue; an Angel gives Gideon his mission. Again, in the New Testament, we have apparitions of Angels to Zachary, to the Blessed Virgin, to St. Joseph, to the shepherds, to our Lord after His fast and after His agony in the garden, to the holy women after the resurrection. Our Saviour Himself speaks of the Angels as ever seeing the face of His Father, as separating the good from the wicked at the last judgment. In all these instances—very many more might be cited—Holy Scripture represents the Angels as personal beings endowed with understanding and will, that is, as gifted with a real, true personality not as divine emanations, mere powers or ideas. Wherefore St. Augustine says: "Although we do not see Angels . . . still we know from faith that there are Angels, and we read and possess in writing that they have appeared to many, hence we cannot lawfully doubt thereon."

This belief in the existence of Angels was common to

almost all the nations of the world. The Greek, the Roman, the Indian, the dweller in the woods of America, believed in Angels, or genii, or demons (δαίμονας), as they were termed by the heathen. Tertullian writes: "We affirm that there are certain spiritual substances, and the name is not new. Philosophers know of demons, for Socrates himself used to await the award of his divine mentor. The poets know of demons. Angels even Plato did not deny." Whether we consult the Bible narrative, or the teaching of the Fathers, or the constant and universal tradition of almost all peoples, we must believe in the existence of Angels.

3. The Angel of Jehovah.

Among the apparitions recorded in the Old Testament, there are many in which he who appears is called the Angel of Jehovah. Often too the same person who has just been called an Angel is afterwards named God. The question, therefore, arises as to whether the Angel of these apparitions is God taken as the Trinity or God taken as the Son, who is elsewhere called the Angel of the Testament. Very many of the Fathers have thought that in these apparitions it was not an Angel but God who manifested Himself, for, they say, the person is called God and acts as God. Moreover, these apparitions served as foreshadowings of the Incarnation. St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, have favoured a different interpretation, which attributes these apparitions to the Angels. This opinion is followed by Saint Thomas and most theologians and scholastic exegetical writers. A third explanation of these apparitions under discussion is that Angels appeared, but that it was God who spoke in them. This explanation, however, is not in harmony with the text of Scripture, according to which the words are spoken by the persons who appear.

4. The Creation of the Angels.

Who brought these spirits into existence? St. Paul tells us: "In Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones . . . or powers:

all things were created by Him and in Him."[1] We know too from Holy Writ that God is the author of all things, for "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," "He spoke and they were made, He commanded and they were created," "He that liveth for ever created all things together," and it expressly places the Angels among the works of God: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord: O ye *Angels* of the Lord, bless the Lord." The Fourth Council of Lateran has defined that "God created together, in the beginning of time, out of nothing, both classes of creatures, spiritual and corporeal, the angelic to wit and the material, and then the human, as a composite of both spirit and body." The Vatican Council has defined the same truth.

Origen seems to have thought that the Angels were created from eternity—a belief that does not tally with the sacred writings, which are convincing on this point. They represent eternity as belonging to God alone, and affirm that He existed before aught else was made.[2] The common teaching of theologians is that the Angels were created at the same time as the material world. He who should deny this, would incur the note of temerity. As to where they were created, Suarez says: "Nothing has been plainly revealed to us in Scripture, or defined in the councils, or handed down to us with common consent by the Fathers."

5. The Number of the Angels.

These Angels have been created, according to Holy Scripture, in vast numbers. In Job xxv. 3, we read, "Is there any numbering of His soldiers?" In Daniel vii. 10, "Thousands on thousands ministered to Him, and ten hundred times a hundred thousand assisted before His throne." In the Apocalypse v. ii, "And the number of them was thousands of thousands." Thus the Creator shows forth more abundantly His greatness, magnificence and goodness, for "in the multitude of people is the dignity of the King."[3] "We cannot" says Father Faber, "meditate on the countless multitude of the Angels, without astonish-

[1] Coloss. i. 16.
[2] Ps. xcix. 3; Prov. viii. 22; St. John xvii. 5, 24; Eph. i. 4.
[3] Prov. xiv. 28.

ment. So vast a populace, of such surpassing beauty, of such gigantic intelligence, of such diversified nature, is simply overwhelming to our most ambitious thoughts. A locust-swarm, and each locust an Archangel; the myriads of points of life disclosed to us by the microscope, and each point a grand spirit. The sands of the seas and the waters of the ocean, and each gram and each drop a beautiful being, the brightness of whose substance we could not see and live: this is but an approximation to the reality. So theologians teach us."

6. The Angelic Choirs.

Holy Writ teaches us that the good Angels are divided into different orders, with definite names, but is silent on what constitutes the nature of each of these orders, what their rank in the heavenly hierarchy. The Fathers also are not in agreement upon this matter. The common opinion among theologians is, that the Angels are divided into three hierarchies, each of which is subdivided into three orders or choirs. The first hierarchy consists of Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; the second of Dominations, Virtues, Powers; the third of Principalities, Archangels, Angels.[1] According to St. Thomas of Aquin, each Angel in these orders is of a distinct species. St. Gregory the Great writes: "We say that there are nine orders of Angels, because the Sacred Scripture is our witness—we know that there are Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Dominations, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim." The distinction between assisting Angels (at the throne of God), and ministering Angels (to other creatures), appears to be one of offices and not of Angels, for it is probable that all the Angels at times perform either office. Raphael, the Archangel who was ministering to the son of Tobias, speaks of himself as one of the seven who stand before the throne of God. However, certain theologians think that the three highest choirs fulfil the duties of ministering Angels only mediately through the other choirs. Yet these names are not taken from their natures, for of the assisting Angels, even the prophet Daniel says: "Thousands on thousands ministered to Him."

[1] Isaias vi. 3; Ezechiel x. 3; 1 Thessalonians iv. 15; Romans viii. 38; Colossians i. 16.

7. Order among the Fallen Angels.

There is rank or order among the fallen spirits. We read of ἀρχαὶ and ἐξουσίαι in the epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, and Lucifer still seems to remain the chief of the demons. "If Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" But the Pharisees hearing it, said, "This man casts out devils, but by Beelzebub the *prince* of the devils." "And the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world: and he was cast unto the earth, and *his Angels* were thrown down with him." Our Lord speaks of the fire "prepared for the *devil and his Angels*." Thus in *Paradise Lost* the apostate Angel, racked with deep despair and vaunting loud cries:

> Here we may reign secure, and, in my choice,
> To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:
> Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.

8. The Superiority of the Angels to Man.

The Angels, considered in their natural state, apart from their elevation by grace, are superior to man in his natural state. For the Angels are pure spirits, whereas man is a composite of spirit and matter. This superiority is declared in Scripture: "Thou hast made him a little less than the Angels." Though this text is applied to Christ, still it is understood of man, for if the human nature of Christ is made a little less than the Angels, much more so is that of man which is not hypostatically united to the divinity. We read in the book of Job: "There is no power on earth that can be compared with him," which text is generally understood of Satan. The Apostle, writing to the Ephesians, tells them that their "wrestling is not against flesh and blood: but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." St. Augustine says that "the angelic world surpasses in its natural dignity all that the Lord has made." We are speaking of man and the Angels in their natural state, for by grace the Blessed Virgin is raised above all creatures.

9. The Spirituality of the Angels.

It is certain, though not defined, that the Angels are pure spirits, *i.e.*, pure intelligences devoid of any kind of body, and without an aptitude for a natural union with a body. To deny this would be a mark of great presumption Before the Fourth Council of Lateran the doctrine of th spirituality of the Angels was not clear to all, and some of the Fathers have spoken of the Angels as having bodies, while others have doubted. Others, however, have clearly professed this doctrine now general in the Church. St. Cyril argues that the Angels cannot be the fathers of the giants "since they are without bodies." St. Ignatius of Antioch calls the Angels "bodiless natures" (*ἀτωμάτους φύσεις*), and St. Gregory Nazianzen says the angelic nature is intelligible and incorporeal [*νοητὴν καὶ ἀσώματον*). St. Gregory the Great asks if any one that is wise and right-minded "will say that the spirits are corporeal."

However, many of the Fathers are to be understood as speaking of a body improperly so termed, for some of them call every created substance a body, others call the Angels corporeal and composite in comparison with God who alone is absolutely simple. Upon this point the witness of Scripture is evident and unmistakable, at least to the mind of the modern Church. For though it recounts the appearance of Angels under human forms, it never assigns as natural to them union with a body, but always calls them spirits: "Are they not all ministering spirits?" "Who makest Thy Angels spirits?" The Bible speaks of the spirit and the soul of man, never of the spirit of the Angels; it distinguishes them from corporeal beings. They only appear to take food.[1] The sons of God, of whose union with the daughters of men Gen. vi. 2 speaks, were not Angels but the descendants of Seth. The Angels are incorruptible and immortal, for death consists in the separation of soul and body. They could cease to be only by the direct omnipotence of God annihilating them. Angels can pass with lightning speed from one spot to another.

[1] See Ps. ciii. 4; St. Matt. viii. 16; St. Luke x. 20, xi. 26; Acts xxiii. 8; Heb. i. 14; Apoc. i. 4; Judges xiii. 19, 20; St. Matt. xxii. 30; St. Luke x. 19, 20; Tob. xii. 19.

10. The Knowledge and Free-Will of the Angels.

The Angels are endowed with a knowledge that far surpasses human intelligence, for Christ at times, in His discourses, introduces angelic knowledge as a climax to human knowledge.[1] By their natural powers they cannot penetrate the mysteries of grace, nor can they read the secrets of the heart, unless it please God to reveal them, for God alone is the searcher of the reins and heart. "Thou alone (O God) knowest the hearts of all the sons of men."[2] God, whose "word is living, more piercing than a two-edged sword, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," has not willed that man's secret thoughts should lie open to be scanned by every passer-by. "Wicked and inscrutable is the heart of all," says the Prophet Jeremias: "who shall understand it? I the Lord, searching the reins and hearts."

Future free acts also are hidden from the Angelic intellect, unless God has made them known, for such knowledge is a special mark of the divinity. "Shew the things that are to come hereafter, and we shall know that ye are gods."[3] When Daniel, by divine revelation, declared the dream of King Nabuchodonoser, the King cried out: "Verily, your God is the God of gods, the Lord of Kings and revealer of hidden things: seeing thou couldst discover this secret." "The truth of divination I hold to be the distinct testimony of the divinity," says Tertullian.

The Angels are endowed with free-will, for they are represented in Scripture as obeying the commands of God,[4] as capable of joys and desires, and as worthy of rewards and punishments. Moreover, some of them fell, which necessarily proves that they are free agents.

11. Speech among the Angels.

The Angels can speak to one another, as Scripture testifies. "And they [the Seraphim] cried one to another and said: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts, all the earth is full of His glory."[5] "If I should speak with the

[1] St. Matt. xxiv. 36.
[2] 3 Kings viii. 39.
[3] Is. xli. 23.
[4] Ps. cii. 20, 21; Apoc. vii. 3.
[5] Is. vi. 3.

tongues of men and *Angels*."[1] "And I saw another Angel ascending from the rising of the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice to the four Angels."[2] "When Michael the Archangel, disputing with the devil, contended."[3] They can speak therefore to God. They sing His glory, extol His power, consult His wisdom, praise His mercy. They can speak to man as the Archangel Gabriel did to Zachary and the Blessed Virgin, and the multitude of the heavenly army to the shepherds on the first Christmas. According to St. Thomas, one Angel converses with another by directing his thought to the other by an act of the will.

12. The Trial of the Angels.

The majority of theologians teach that the Angels were created in grace. But Hugo and Richard of Saint Victor, Peter Lombard, St. Bonaventure, think that for some time the Angels were left to their natural resources before they were elevated to a supernatural state. The trial of the Angels is not expressly recounted in Scripture, but that there was a trial cannot be doubted, for it is affirmed unanimously by tradition.

Moreover, it is certain that the demons were created in the beginning good, and like the holy Angels. St. Peter tells us that the demons have been cast into hell because of their sin.[4] Whence it is manifest that the good Angels could have sinned and have been submitted to a trial.

From the sin of the bad Angels, which, according to the common opinion, was a sin of pride,—"for pride is the beginning of sin,"[5] and in the book of Tobias we read, "Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words: for from it all perdition took its beginning;" and St. Paul writes to Timothy "lest being puffed up with pride, he fall into the judgment of the devil,"—we cannot ascertain what was the nature of the trial. Probably it was not of long duration, for Scripture does not allow us to understand that any of the good Angels fell, yet supposes that the devils were consigned to hell for their first sin.[6]

We do not know what was the number of those that fell

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 1. [2] Apoc. vii. 2. [3] St. Jude 9.
[4] 2 St. Pet. ii. 4; see also St. Matt. xxv. 41; St. Jude 6. Eccl. x. 15. [5] 2 St. Pet. ii. 4.

and those that remained faithful; probably far the greater number persevered.

The good Angels, according to their diverse merits, have received heavenly rewards, and now enjoy the beatific vision through the good use they have made of grace. For in Scripture they are called the "elect Angels;" they are said "to see the face of the Father Who is in heaven;" to stand "round the throne of God," to dwell in thousands in the heavenly Jerusalem; and we know that to merit such a supernatural reward, grace is requisite, for "grace," says St. Paul, "is life everlasting."

13. The Assaults of the Evil Angels.

It is of faith that there are demons, and that they tempt man only, however, by the permission of God. We learn from Holy Writ that our first parents were tempted in the garden, that Christ Himself was tempted in the desert, that Satan entered the heart of Judas, that Ananias and Saphira were tempted to lie to the Holy Ghost. Moreover, the devil covered Job from the sole of his foot to the top of his head with a foul ulcer, nay, besides inflicting physical evils, he and his Angels possess the very bodies of men.[1]

Christ our Lord in His parables points out the machinations of the devil: the Apostles, in their epistles, warn men against the wiles of this father of lies. We have too in the Church, among her ministers, the order of exorcist, and rules and prayers for exercising are prescribed by the Ritual. Tertullian, in his Apology, thus publicly challenges the heathens: "Bring out someone before your tribunals who is clearly harassed by a demon: if that spirit is bidden by any Christian to speak, so truly will he confess himself a demon, as elsewhere he falsely will give himself out to be a god."

Many theologians hold that to each man a demon is deputed. However, it is the more common opinion that all temptations do not come directly from the devil, but also from man himself, who, in his trial state, has

> A traitor nestling close at home,
> Connatural, who with the powers of hell
> Was leagued, and of his senses kept the keys
> And to that deadliest foe unlock'd his heart.

[1] St. Matt. iv. 24, viii. 16, xii. 24; Macc. i. 32, 34; St. Luke vii. 21, viii. 2; Acts xvi. 16–18, xix. 12.

Suggestions of the good and bad Angels cannot always be easily distinguished, for the demons often transform themselves into Angels of light, and when

> They will the blackest sins put on
> They do suggest at first with heavenly shows.

Hence, rules are necessary, and are given by St. Ignatius of Loyola in the book of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In general, it may be said that the devils ever try to trouble and sadden; they notice, like a general attacking a citadel, the weakest point, and there direct their attack, but

> When some child of grace, Angel or Saint,
> Pure and upright in his integrity
> Of Nature, meets the demons on their raid
> They scud away as cowards from the fight;
> Thus oft hath holy hermit in his cell,
> Not yet disburden'd of mortality,
> Mocked at their threats and warlike overtures,
> Or dying, when they swarm'd like flies, around,
> Defied them, and departed to his Judge.[1]

14. The Offices of the Angels to God and the Son of God.

The offices of the holy Angels to God are to praise Him, for "the morning stars praised Him together, and the sons of God made a joyful melody," to bless and adore Him, to carry out His orders and execute His judgements; "Bless the Lord, all ye His Angels: you that are mighty in strength, and execute His word, hearkening to the voice of His orders. Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts; you ministers of His that do His will."

They have special duties to perform to the Word made Flesh: "When He brought His first begotten into the world, He saith: 'And let the Angels of God adore Him.'" A multitude of these blessed spirits sang songs of joy and thanksgiving on the night that Mary brought forth the Infant Saviour and laid Him in the manger. After His

[1] *Paradise Lost.*

fast and temptation, after His agony in the garden, the Man of Sorrows deigned to receive consolation from an Angel. Now continually do they cry before the great white throne: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction."

15. Guardian Angels.

It seems to be of faith that the Angels are deputed to guard men in general.[1] The numerous apparitions of Angels to the Patriarchs, Moses, the Judges, the Kings, the Prophets, the Blessed Virgin, Zachary, St. Joseph, the Apostles, recounted in Scripture, testify clearly to this general guardianship. "Are they (the Angels) not," says St. Paul, "all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation." It is commonly held in the Church that each man individually —with the exception of Christ our Saviour—has a special Guardian Angel, for our Lord says: "Their Angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven," where we should note that He says not Angel but Angels and *their*. This was the belief among the early Christians, for we read in the Acts that when the girl Rhode asserted that St. Peter was at the door knocking, the faithful who had met for prayers in the house answered, "It is his Angel." The words of the patriarch Jacob, and of Judith affirming that the Angel of the Lord had guarded them, confirm this belief. "I hold," says Suarez, "that not only the just but even sinners, not only the faithful but even the unfaithful, not only the baptized but the unbaptized have Guardian Angels." This is the common opinion of theologians and the Fathers.

"In every resting-place, in every corner," says St. Bernard, "reverence your Guardian Angel . . . if you consult faith, it proves to you that the angelic presence fails not." St. Jerome exclaims: "Great is the dignity of the soul, since each has an Angel assigned to watch over it."

It is the common opinion that nations, kingdoms and provinces, have special Angels assigned by God to watch over them. Several passages of Holy Scripture support

[1] *Cf.* Petavius, Bk. ii. c. 6; Saurez, Bk. iv. c. 17.

this opinion : the book of Daniel mentions the Angels of the Greeks and of the Persians, and in Exodus we read of the Angel that went before the camp of Israel. According to the Septuagint translation,[1] God has divided the earth into nations corresponding to the number of His Angels. The Angel of the Jewish people was Michael, who is now the special protector of the Universal Church, for which he fights.[2]

The ministry of these blessed spirits to their charge, man, is plainly written on the pages of Holy Scripture. They are to protect the just, to inspire holy thoughts, to restrain and ward off the attacks of the demons, to avert dangers, to offer the prayers of the faithful to God, at times to inflict healing and salutary chastisements, to pray for those committed to their charge, to console the souls detained in Purgatory, and at last to escort them to heaven.[3]

These last services of the Angel Guardian are beautifully described by Cardinal Newman in the *Dream of Gerontius*. The Angel speaks :

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.

Angels, to whom the willing task is given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee as thou liest ;
And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven,
Shall aid thee at the throne of the Most Highest.

[1] Deut. xxxii. 8.

[2] Dan. x. 13, 21 ; Exodus xiv. 19 ; Jude 9 ; Apoc. xii. 7. This belief in Guardian Angels flourished among the Persians, Greeks, and other peoples.

[3] Ps. xcii. 13 ; Hebrews i. 14 ; Gen. xviii. ; Judges xiii. ; Acts v. 19 ; Tobias vi. viii. 3 ; Judith xiii. 20 ; Tobias xii. 12 ; Apocalypse viii. ; St. Luke xvi. 22.

Farewell, but not for ever, brother dear!
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.

16. The Old Law given through Ministry of Angels.

St. Stephen, in the Acts, and St. Paul to the Hebrews, declare that the Mosaic dispensation was given to the Jews through the ministry of Angels—"who have received the law by the disposition of Angels and have not kept it." Thus the superiority of the Christian revelation is shown, for it was brought into the world by the Eternal Son, for "in these days" God "hath spoken to us by His Son, the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance." Though the Angels participate largely in the works of God, there are certain works that He reserves to Himself—for example, the creation of the world and the redemption of mankind.

17. Ministry of Angels in the Visible Creation.

Certain Fathers and theologians have held that the Angels under God preside over the visible world. St. Thomas says: "All corporeal substances are ruled by Angels." We certainly have many instances of angelic ministry in the visible creation. The Scriptures tell us that two Angels struck with blindness the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, that an Angel destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians, that an Angel descended from heaven to move the waters of the Probatic Pool, that an Angel rolled away the huge stone from the mouth of the sepulchre.

Again, in the Apocalypse we read of "the four Angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds," of "the four Angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and sea," of "the Angel who had power over fire," and of "the Angel of the waters." Wherefore "every breath of air and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect," writes Cardinal Newman of the Angels, "is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the

robes of those whose faces see God in heaven;" and again, "Above and below the clouds of air, the trees of the field, the waters of the great deep will be found, impregnated with forms of everlasting spirits, the servants of God who do His pleasure."

18. The Honour and Devotion paid to the Angels.

Those who erroneously believed that the Angels created the world, and wrought the redemption of mankind, naturally rendered them a worship due to God alone. Probably for this reason St. Paul warns the Colossians against a false religion of the Angels, and the spirit in the Apocalypse, before whom St. John would have fallen prostrate, bids him desist and adore God. Scripture, however, is far from condemning that devotion which is paid to the Angels as the beloved ministers of God—nay, on the contrary, it encourages us to offer prayers to them, that they may present them upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of the Lord. Again we know that Josue took off his shoes from his feet out of reverence for the spot where these heavenly spirits had appeared. The Catholic Church has ever honoured the Angels, not with that supreme worship, called *latria*, which belongs only to God, but with an inferior and relative honour, as the servants and chosen friends of God, known as *dulia*. She assigns them an office and a Mass in her liturgy, and exhorts her children to revere, love and pray to them, that they may ever experience the help and intercession of these holy spirits, to whose untiring care they have been entrusted by the divine mercy to be sweetly enlightened, lovingly tended, and faithfully shielded. "Despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that their Angels in heaven see the face of My Father Who is in heaven." "He hath given His Angels charge over thee, to guide thee in all thy ways."

A FLAG OF TRUCE:

OR,

MUST WE FIGHT FOR EVER?

A few Words of Peace addressed to Protestants

BY THE
REV. T. E. BRIDGETT,
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PREFACE.

THE purpose of this little book is expressed by its title. It is not a Treaty of Peace, not a formal discussion of terms of agreement between Protestants and Catholics. It is something preliminary, a white flag of truce waved with the hope of stopping the conflict for a little, for the sake of discussing whether there is any desire or possibility of peace. It is an attempt to show that, if prejudice can be laid aside, there is more agreement than is commonly thought between the opposing forces, and that the fight is often for words rather than for realities.

Protestants do not form a united body, under one organization and government; their warfare therefore against Catholics is of the Guerrilla kind, and my little Flag is waved in the hope of attracting the attention of any small band or individual skirmishers, who may parley on their own account, without consulting other combatants. The book is small, because a Flag of Truce is not a Royal Standard. I only want to get a hearing during two or three half hours. I pray the Holy Spirit of Peace to bless those half hours to the removal of bitterness and softening of prejudice.

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

St. Mary's, Clapham.

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CHAPTER I.

CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT EMANCIPATION.

SOME business had taken me to a small town in the West of England, and I had to spend two or three long winter evenings in the coffee-room of the hotel. I had not much inclination for conversing with its chance occupants, and found it a dreary task to turn over and over again the London and local journals; so I inquired for a circulating library, whence I could obtain some books. I was directed to one kept by a respectable widow in the High Street. On inspecting her stock, I found that it consisted mainly of a very inferior class of novels, in a worn and greasy state, among which were several of disreputable notoriety. A few questions showed me that the widow knew little of their contents, and had no wish to be enlightened. They were supplied by a London agent, and were evidently the sweepings of the book-shops. Her customers, she said, found no fault with them,

and she herself had no time to read books. She got what were asked for. So I paid my deposit, and putting aside the literature of recent date, I chose from the older stock a few books, which might serve to beguile the time—two novels, two narratives of travels, and a volume of poetry. *Frank Mildmay* and *Midshipman Easy*, by Captain Marryat, were the novels. The gallant captain had been a favourite in my school days. It might be pleasant to awake recollections of boyhood. Books of travel and adventure have always interested me. I noticed two which promised well by their titles, *The Bungalow and the Tent*, by Sullivan, and *A Journal of an Expedition Fourteen Hundred Miles up the Orinoco*, by Robinson. Of these books, or of their authors, I knew nothing. I saw that they had been printed in the first quarter of the present century. The volume of poetry was *Italy*, by Samuel Rogers. I felt ashamed at never having read this poem. Here was an opportunity of removing ignorance. From these five books I promised myself some quiet amusement, in the old sense of the word, which means the state of those who *muse* pleasantly over strange or curious matters, letting the mind wander amid associations thus awakened; and I found what I sought, not exactly in the things narrated, but in the startling religious prejudices of the writers. Books that are more than half a century old do not awaken disgust or anger, as if they had just appeared, and were actually doing mischief. The two forgotten volumes of travel were so grotesque, wherever religion was mentioned, that instead of exciting bitterness in my mind, they suggested the pleasant thought

that modern Protestants are more sensible, or certainly less prejudiced, than their grandfathers. What I found in Marryat and Rogers I will tell presently.

On opening Mr. Sullivan's book I had expected to find a record of the experience of a Catholic military officer. It was however soon evident that the author was no Catholic, and that, if an Irishman, as his name suggested, he had kept well aloof from his Catholic countrymen. One passage was so curious that I copied it in my pocket-book. After remarking that Protestant missionaries find it hard to cope with Catholics in the conversion of the natives of Ceylon, because the latter are at unity, whereas the former are ever contradicting each other, Mr. Sullivan hastens to neutralize this dangerous admission as follows: "The Roman Church, moreover, recognises the doctrine of allowing the end to justify the means, and does not hesitate to tolerate and even patronise a certain admixture of idolatry in her worship—by that means inducing a belief among her converts, that the dissimularity is not so great after all, and that by transferring their faith from Buddha to some other saint, whose image is offered to their worship, they are merely worshipping him in another form." Thus far the writer might be only borrowing a leaf from the Anglican Homily *On the Peril of Idolatry*, but his next observation has a genuine originality. "I have frequently entered Roman Catholic Chapels in Ceylon, and seen the priest seated on high at the altar, surrounded by trashy finery and blazing lamps, receiving the grovelling prostrations of the worshippers, and it could not fail to strike me that the cere-

mony appeared too much like the adoration of the priest himself, the substitution of an animate for an inanimate object—and that the idol-worship of the Buddhist, and the priest-worship of the Roman Catholic were but different forms tending to the same end."

My musing or amusement on reading these words was to conjecture at what rites Mr. Sullivan had been present; and to think how little the good celebrant of Mass could have suspected, as he sat patiently with hands on knees, while the Creed was being sung, and the people knelt at the *Incarnatus est*, that there was a peering British officer likening him to a gilded idol of Vishnu or Siva. I found also some amusement in the thought of Mr. Sullivan himself, on his return from his travels, being admitted to "grovelling prostration" before his Majesty George IV., of pious memory, and in wondering to what purpose his worship of that "animate object" might have tended. Lastly, to use Mr. Sullivan's phrase, "it could not fail to strike me," that if a priest may be like an idol, a British officer also, though he have feet that walk far and wide, and a hand that writes books of travels may have eyes that see not, ears that hear not, and a mind that understands nothing.

Laying aside the *Bungalow and the Tent*, I turned to *Fourteen Hundred Miles up the Orinoco*. Mr. Sullivan travelled East, Mr. F. H. Robinson, West, but they both carried with them Protestant spectacles, through which to study the manners of the world. My eyes soon fell on the following page, which I also transferred as a curiosity to my pocket-book. "I must confess that I could never obtain a perfect conception

of the conduct of the Padre to a dying person till I had actually witnessed it. There is a formal procession of the Padre and a few of his satellites towards the house in which the unfortunate person, supposed to be dying, lies. The ceremony generally takes place in the dead of the night, and as they approach to the house, there are placed, at intervals of considerable distance, from six to ten or twelve lanterns with lighted tapers, some persons carrying images of Christ on the Cross, some the Host,* or other emblems of their religion. Then they move slowly and solemnly along, praying without ceasing for the departing soul of the dying man, and at the same time the awful effect of the scene is heightened by the occasional tolling of the bell. Upon entering the house they formally take their place in the chamber, and candles are held before the sick person's eyes; he is then urged with various interrogatories as to his resignation or fear of death; indeed, all manner of stratagems seem to be divised sufficing absolutely to frighten a man out of the few glimmering sparks of life which remain. It may well be imagined that but few survive this dreadful visitation, almost severe enough to drive a healthy man out of the world."

Mr. Robinson, the author of this remarkable account of the visitation of the sick, was a surgeon, and a scientific explorer. Whether his account of the fauna and flora of the Orinoco district was as imaginative as his pictures of ecclesiastical functions, I did not think it worth while to inquire. After making my extract, I closed his book, and dreamt that night of priests

* Note, dear Catholic reader, "some the Host"! It is a masterstroke.

seated on high amidst blazing lamps and receiving grovelling prostrations, and of sick men driven out of their wits by having lighted candles held before their eyes.

Next evening I had better success with Captain Marryat. His pictures of nautical life in the heroic times of Nelson and Collingwood are very lively, and not devoid of historical merit. Though he loves the navy, he draws no flattering picture; indeed, it is somewhat painful to read his frank acknowledgment of the universal profanity and licentiousness of officers and men. Things must surely have mended much since then. I was, however, specially struck by some accounts of Catholic doctrine and morality, which showed to what extent prejudice might distort the vision of a clever and otherwise candid man.

In the story of Jack Easy, the young English midshipman has been invited with his brother officers to a bal masqué at a town in Minorca. He goes in the character of a devil's imp. At last he finds the rooms hot and the sport tedious, and, without changing his costume, determines to seek diversion out of doors.

He walked into the country about half a mile, until he came to a splendid house, standing in a garden of orange trees, which he determined to reconnoitre. He observed that a window was open and lights were in the room, and he climbed up to the window and just opened the white curtain and looked in. On a bed lay an elderly person, evidently dying, and by the side of the bed were three priests. One of them held the crucifix in his hand, another the censer,*

* Note, dear reader, "the censer"! It is an artistic touch to be put side by side with Mr. Robinson's "some the Host."

and a third was sitting at a table with a paper, pen and ink. As Jack understood Spanish, he listened and heard one of the priests say: "Your sins have been enormous, my son. I cannot give you extreme unction or absolution unless you make some amends."

"I have," answered the moribund, "left money for ten thousand Masses to be said for my soul."

"Five hundred thousand Massses are not sufficient; how have you gained your enormous wealth? by usury and robbing the poor."

"I have left a thousand dollars to be distributed among the poor on the day of my funeral."

"One thousand dollars is nothing. You must leave all your property to Holy Church."

"And my children!" replied the dying man faintly.

"What are your children compared to your salvation? Reply not; either consent, or not only do I refuse you the consolation of the dying, but I excommunicate—"

"Mercy, holy father, mercy," cried the old man in a dying voice.

"There is no mercy, you are damned for ever and ever. Now hear: Excommunicabo te—"

"Stop, stop; have you the paper ready?"

"'Tis here, all ready, by which you revoke all former wills and endow the Church with your property. We will read it, for God forbid it should be said that the Holy Church received an involuntary gift."

"I will sign it," replied the dying man; "but my sight fails me; be quick, absolve me." And the paper was signed with difficulty, as the priests supported the dying man. "And now absolve me."

"I absolve thee," replied the priest, who then went through the ceremony.

"Now this is a confounded rascally business," said Jack to himself.

The novelist then describes how Jack enters the room by the window in his devil's dress, frightens the priests out of their wits, seizes the paper and tears it up, and disappears with a loud ha! ha!

It may be said that this is only broad farce. Even so, are Catholic death-beds and Catholic Sacraments the legitimate matter for broad farce? But in fact, Marryat writes always in this style about the Catholic Church. In his descriptions or caricatures of Catholic practices he was the spokesman of the English gentry who were resisting Catholic Emancipation.

I had copied out this page from *Midshipman Easy* as a pendent to Mr. Robinson's death-bed scene; but I have printed it now rather for the sake of a contrast; and the contrast I found in the other book by the same writer which I had selected from the circulating library. This was *Frank Mildmay*. Marryat makes his hero say on one occasion, that he so thoroughly despised the Catholic religion, that he would rather have turned Turk than have embraced it. It is therefore all the more instructive to find him, in the only passage where there is serious mention of religious principles, adopting unconsciously what is most distinctive of Catholics, and most offensive to Protestant prejudice—auricular confession. The hero of the novel has been painted as given up from his early boyhood to almost every vice, deceit, pride, revenge, and licentiousness. Finally he has

become a sceptic, and almost an atheist. He has lost his mistress and his illegitimate child while abroad, and has gone to the churchyard where they are buried, which happens to be near the Anglican bishop's palace. The date is supposed to be about 1812.

"Maddened with anguish of head and heart, I threw myself violently on the grave; I beat my miserable head against the tombstones; I called with frantic exclamation on the name of Eugenia; and at length sank on the turf, between the two graves in a state of stupor and exhaustion, from which a copious flood of tears in some measure relieved me.

"I was aroused by the sound of wheels and the trampling of horses; and looking up, I perceived the bishop's carriage and four, with outriders, pass by. The livery and colour of the carriage were certainly what is denominated quiet; but there was an appearance of state which indicated that the owner had not entirely 'renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world,' and my spleen was excited.

"'Ah, sweep along,' I bitterly murmured, 'worthy type indeed of the Apostles! I like the pride that apes humility. Is that the way you teach your flock to 'leave all and follow Me?' I started up suddenly, saying to myself, 'I will seek this man in his palace and see whether I shall be kindly received and consoled, or be repulsed by a menial.'

"The thought was sudden, and, being conceived almost in a state of frenzy, was instantly executed. 'Let me try,' said I, 'whether a bishop can administer to the mind diseased, as well as a country curate.'

"I moved on with rapidity to the palace, more in a fit of desperation than with a view of seeking peace of mind. I rang loudly and vehemently at the gate, and asked whether the bishop was at home. An elderly domestic, who seemed to regard me with astonishment, answered me in the affirmative, and desired me to walk into an ante-room, while he announced me to his master.

"I now began to recall my scattered senses, to perceive the absurdity of my conduct; I was therefore about to quit the palace, into which I had so rudely intruded, without waiting for my audience, when the servant opened the door and requested me to follow him . . . .

"I followed the servant with a kind of stupid indifference, and was ushered into the presence of a benevolent looking old man, between sixty and seventy years of age. His whole external appearance, as well as his white hairs, commanded respect amounting almost to admiration. I was not prepared to speak, which he perceived and kindly began: 'As you are a stranger to me, I fear, from your care-worn countenance, that it is no common occurrence which has brought you here. Sit down: you seem in distress; and if it is in my power to afford you relief, you may be sure that I will do so.'

"There was in his manner and address an affectionate kindness which overcame me. I could neither speak nor look at him; but, laying my head on the table, and hiding my face with my hands, I wept bitterly. The good bishop allowed me reasonable time to recover myself, and, with extreme good breeding, mildly requested, that, if it were possible, I would confide to him the cause of my affliction.

"'Be not afraid or ashamed, my good lad,' said he, 'to tell me your sorrows. If we have temporal blessings, we do not forget that we are but the almoners of the Lord; we endeavour to follow His example: but, if I may judge from appearance, it is not pecuniary aid you have come to solicit.'

"'No, no,' replied I; 'it is not money I want;' but, choked with excess of feeling, I could say no more.

"'This is indeed a more important case than one of mere bodily want,' said the good man. '*That* we might very soon supply; but there seems something in your condition which requires our more serious attention. I thank the Almighty for selecting me to this service: and, with His blessing, we shall not fail of success.'

"Then, going to the door, he called to a young lady, who, I afterwards discovered, was his daughter, and, holding the door ajar as he spoke, that I might not be seen in my distress, said, 'Caroline, my dear, write to the duke, and beg him to excuse my dining with him to-day. Tell him that I am kept at home by business of importance; and give orders that I be not interrupted on any account.'

"He then turned the key in the door, and drawing a chair close to mine, begged me, in the most persuasive manner, to tell him everything without reserve, in order that he might apply such a remedy as the case seemed to demand.

"I first asked for a glass of wine, which was instantly brought; he received it at the door, and gave it to me with his own hand. Having drunk it, I commenced the history of my life in a brief outline, and ultimately told him all; nearly

as much in detail as I have related to the reader. He listened to me with an intense and painful interest, questioning me as to my feelings on many important occasions; and having at length obtained from me an honest and candid confession, without any extenuation,—'My young friend,' said he, 'your life has been one of peculiar temptation, and excess,—much to deplore, much to blame, and much to repent of; but the state of feeling which induced you to come to me is a proof that you now only require that which, with God's help, I trust I shall be able to supply. It is now late, and we both of us require some refreshment. I will order in dinner, and you must send to the Inn for your portmanteau.'

"I shall briefly state, that I remained in the palace ten days, in the most perfect seclusion. Every morning the good bishop dedicated two or three hours to my instruction and improvement; he put into my hands one or two books at a time, with marks in them, indicating the pages which I ought to consult."

The episode ends with an account of Mr. Mildmay's receiving "the Sacrament," *i.e.*, not absolution, but the Lord's Supper, in the bishop's private room, at the conclusion of which rite, he says :—

"I felt that I had faith, that I was a new man—that my sins were forgiven: and dropping my head on the side of the table, I remained some minutes in grateful and fervent prayer."

Here was fresh food for musing, for the passage had pleased me much, and all the more by its contrast with the Minorcan picture. What has Captain Marryat here related or imagined? Not being thrown into his scoffing mood by the

thought of Catholic priests, he has drawn a simple and touching picture of "auricular confession," as Protestants love to brand it, *i.e.*, of private and secret confession made by a penitent sinner to his spiritual father, who listens to it, not from friendship, but from a sense of duty, as God's minister to a diseased soul. The confession is not vague or general, but "honest and candid," "without reserve," and "without extenuation," being made complete by the opportune interrogations of the confessor.

Captain Marryat has even introduced what most Protestants would consider a specially insidious invention for getting hold of impressionable youths, a ten days' retreat in solitude, under the direction of a well-trained master in the art of suggesting soul-subduing thoughts, together with spiritual reading carefully marked out for the same purpose.

Were such things written in a modern novel, they might justly be suspected of having been consciously borrowed from the Catholic Church, and be denounced as Popish. It is probable that Captain Marryat, who wrote the above in 1828, had no thought whatever that his Anglican prelate was playing the popish confessor. In his partiality for the Established Church of England, he wished to show that, in spite of worldly appearances, there might be genuine benevolence, and spiritual zeal and wisdom in its prelates. Yet after all what is the extent of his bishop's heroic devotion? He does kindly and generously, yet once perhaps in a life time, what is the every day business of genuine Catholic priests. The Jesuit or Franciscan or Dominican father, who is appointed to guide laymen through

a ten days' retreat, has not indeed to dismiss his carriage and four with outriders, nor to send a message by his daughter to cancel his dinner engagement with a duke, but otherwise he has to devote himself to his penitent very much after the fashion of this supposed venerable bishop. And many a confessor, both religious and secular, devotes—not ten mornings in a life-time, but—many hours every day for thirty or forty years, not to an interesting young gentleman of good family, but to poor men and poor women as well as to the rich, to the stupid and ignorant as well as to the apt and clever. Marryat could imagine no motive as impelling *them*, but the most sordid avarice or abominable profligacy!

Lastly, I turned to Rogers. I knew his *Pleasures of Memory*, and expected a certain elegant mediocrity. What would the rich and fashionable banker have to say about Italy? Certainly nothing but good of its scenery and climate. But what of its people and religion? The volume called *Italy* is merely a collection of fragments. The first that caught my eye was entitled "Banditti." The picture is interesting, and was perhaps accurate in those days; but in the midst of it come the following lines:—

> Two monks
> Portly, grey headed, on their gallant steeds,
> Cross the brown heath, ere long to wag their beards
> Before my lady abbess, and discuss
> Things only known to the devout and pure,
> O'er her spiced bowl—then shrive the sisterhood,
> Sitting by turns with an inclining ear
> In the confessional.

The foul insinuations contained in these lines are worse than the death-bed scene in Marryat. This is not what Rogers saw in Italy, any more than the other is what Marryat saw in Corsica. These were the imaginations of the hearts of English gentlemen in the early days of the present century. I turned to another fragment called "The Nun." It is less vile, but it is also an English imagination, not an Italian picture. Rogers appears to have been present at the "clothing" of a postulant of noble family, and his description of what he actually witnessed is correct. He saw her cast away with alacrity and joy her worldly trappings, submit without repugnance to the cutting off of her beautiful tresses, and clothe herself with the humble habit and veil of a nun. It is after this, when the ceremony is over, that the Protestant imagination of the poet runs riot. He follows her to her cell, and thinks of the days when her enthusiasm will have passed away:—

> In thy gentle bosom sleep
> Feelings, affections, destined now to die,
> To wither like the blossom in the bud,
> Those of a wife, a mother; leaving there
> A cheerless void, a chill as of the grave,
> A languor and a lethargy of soul
> Deathlike and gathering more and more, till Death
> Come to release thee.

Rogers wrote in 1822. Such were then the prevalent views in England regarding the cloister; not deduced from history or observation, but drawn from mere Protestant theory or tradition. A nunnery was either a place of scandal or a tomb of broken hearts. Now-a-days

there are very many English ladies who will warmly resent the theory that all who are not wives and mothers are "blossoms withered in the bud." There are also so many nuns now on English soil that facts are killing fiction, and languor and lethargy are not considered the staple of the conventual life.

But it is more interesting to contrast Rogers with himself, the dreamer with the witness. Another of these fragments is devoted to the monks of the Great St. Bernard, and the following lines tell us what Rogers *saw* :—

> Some were almost in their prime,
> Nor was a brow o'ercast. Seen as they sate
> Ranged round their ample hearth-stone in an hour
> Of rest, they were as gay and free from guile
> As children; answering, and at once, to all
> The gentler impulses, to pleasure, mirth;
> Mingling, at intervals, with rational talk,
> Music; and gathering news from them that came
> As of some other worlds. But when the storm
> Rose, and the snow rolled on in ocean waves,
> When on his face th' experienced traveller fell,
> Sheltering his lips and nostrils with his hands,
> Then all was changed, and sallying with their pack,
> Into that blank of nature, they became
> Unearthly beings.

Soothed with the better tone of these lines I closed my book, and retired to rest; and as the moon shone brightly into my room, I pleased myself with the thought that the night of ignorance and prejudice is not so dark in England as it was when this century began its course. We date Catholic Emancipation from 1829. Much of what I have quoted was probably the

result of the passions aroused in the heat of the political and religious controversies of those days. Might it not be said that about the same period began Protestant Emancipation from the tyranny of bugbears and hobgoblins? With a prayer that the deliverance might soon become complete and universal, I fell asleep.

Next day, in my lonely walk, the memory of what I had read set me brooding, whether the better feelings of the present day might be turned to account. It occurred to me that on other subjects, besides confession and monastic life, I might find Protestant testimony to counteract Protestant accusations, and Protestant candour to answer Protestant prejudice. I chose, not as a likely but as an unlikely subject, devotion to saints and the use of images. I determined to test my theory on the first opportunity. When next I found myself in a fairly stocked library with a few spare hours, I turned over a number of books. The result I will give in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II.

PROTESTANT TESTIMONY ON THE INTERVENTION OF THE SAINTS.

"O testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ!" "O what a proof that the soul is naturally Christian!" These words of Tertullian are famous, but they are seldom quoted precisely in their original signification. Tertullian was defending the unity of God, and amongst other proofs he remarked that the heathen themselves, educated as they were in polytheism, would yet, when under the impulse of sudden excitement or strong feeling, utter exclamations and invocations in which the name of God took the singular not the plural form: "God help me," not "the Gods help me;" and this he rightly considered a proof that the soul, when true to nature, is Christian, that is, *Monotheist*, whereas the language of polytheism is merely conventional.

A very similar argument might be drawn out in defence of the belief in the intervention or intercession of the saints, and even of the lawfulness of their invocation, from the spontaneous language of Protestants, when they forget their traditional hostility to the Catholic Church, and give utterance to the true and deep instincts of the human heart.

There are, indeed, men who are quite willing to grant that Catholic doctrines and practices are founded on human nature; and they think that thereby enough is said to condemn them;

for what is meant by human nature but the corruption of the human heart? But this Calvinistic assumption, that man is by nature utterly corrupt, and that all his natural instincts are therefore evil, is a dangerous weapon to handle. The belief in a Supreme Being, the belief in a future state of rewards and punishments, are natural and universal: are they therefore to be rejected? Is there not rather a legitimate presumption that under some form the doctrines thus universally admitted are true? There may be errors concerning the nature of the Godhead; but the universal consent which underlies the varying theories, proves that a God exists. There may be, in the various systems of religion, fanciful and absurd notions regarding the future state; yet all agree, and by their agreement prove, that rewards and punishments do await the souls that leave this world. So too, in the passages that will be presently quoted from Protestant writers, there may be mistakes concerning the bliss of souls, or the souls that are in bliss; yet these errors do not invalidate the belief, which is prior to and independent of them, that in the invisible world souls dear to God watch over us, and help us.

Julius Charles Hare records in his Life of Sterling that that remarkable man believed that the spirits of his departed relatives might be spectators of his thoughts and actions, and that it was worth while to try and please them; and in later life he would conclude: "How deeply rooted in human nature is the tendency to the worship of saints, to the beatification and deification of those whom death has hidden from our outward eyes!"* Surely either Sterling or

* Memoir prefixed to *Essays and Tales* by John Sterling, p. viii.

his biographer here fails in accuracy of thought and language. Is it as corrupt a tendency of the human heart to *beatify* the dead, as to *deify* them? Beatitude is the sight, the love, the fruition of the one true God. To deify a creature is to dethrone the one God and set an idol in His place. How was Mr. Sterling's belief a deification of the departed? Did St. Peter deify the devil, when he affirmed him to be watching and studying our characters, and ever roving around us for our injury? To suppose, then, that sainted souls may do for our good what the devils do for our hurt, may indeed be a beatification; but in no sense can it be a deification of those whom "death has hidden," but of whom it should be remembered that "they are hidden with Christ in God."

Sterling belonged to the extreme liberal section of Protestantism. The lady whose reflections shall now be quoted belonged to the Puritanical school, and the authority whom she cites is the celebrated Quakeress, so well known in the history of prison reform. Here then is a page from the diary of Miss Methuen, a page not destined by her for publication, in which, therefore, she was under no constraint to conform to the language usual among Protestants, but expressed her own genuine thoughts and feelings:—

"There is a remark by Mrs. Fry, which much coincides with my own ideas,—that the spirits of the departed influence those who are left. How often since dear Bessie's death have I fancied her spirit hovering over me, especially when I have been indulging in a train of erroneous thought; I have fancied her soft dark

eye resting upon me, and gazing on me with grief! Another idea in my mind is, that, when she died, God might have said to her guardian angel, 'Go, watch over Mary as her friend would have done.' And then the angel, knowing so peculiarly her mind, thoughts, and feelings, would actually inspire me with the same, and would be able to fulfil my friend's desires for me in those things in which her judgment was influenced, when on earth, by the spirit of God."*

A third instance of this trust comes from a higher source. Her Majesty Queen Victoria has related how the carriage in which she was travelling was upset; and thus continues:— "Almost directly after the accident happened, I said it was terrible not to be able to tell it to my dearest Albert; to which Alice answered: 'But he knows it all, and I am sure he watched over us.'" "I am thankful," continues the Queen, "that it was by no imprudence of mine, or the slightest deviation from what my beloved one and I had always been in the habit of doing, and which he sanctioned and approved."† I will merely remark that all this language of the Queen of England and her daughter would be thought very superstitious by most Protestant readers, if St. Joseph's or St. Antony's name were substituted for that of Prince Albert, and if the writer were a Queen of Naples or of Spain, instead of the Queen of England. It is not superstitious, however, but instinctive, in the best sense of the word.

* From her memoirs, written by her mother, the Hon. Mrs. Methuen.

† *More Leaves from a Journal of our Life in the Highlands* (1884).

The examples just given of John Sterling, Mrs. Fry, Miss Methuen, and her Majesty Queen Victoria, show that the thought of guardian saints is wide spread among Protestants. A few examples from works of fiction will confirm this view.

A little tale called *An Eventful Night*, originally composed by a German Protestant minister, has been translated and published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, of which all the bishops of the Church of England are patrons. In sanctioning this publication it is hardly to be supposed that the committee intended to give support to Catholic views on patron saints; yet such is the force of the following passage, which is part of a conversation between a young orphan lady, a Lutheran, and a candidate for the Lutheran ministry.

"It is the portrait of my poor father," said the young lady, with tears in her eyes. "I could unfortunately only paint it from memory." "Is he far from you?" I asked gently. "Very far, and yet perhaps very near," she whispered, and pointed with her white hand above. "He is dead," I replied with emotion. The lady struggled for composure. "Oh! he is near you," I said earnestly, while the tears came into my eyes; "He is looking down upon you in love, *never renounce the belief*."

A more familiar illustration of filial trust in a deceased parent is found in one of Dickens's works.

When poor little Oliver Twist awakes to consciousness after his fever, his nurse exclaims: "Pretty creetur! what would his mother feel if she had sat by him as I have, and could see him now?"

"Perhaps she does see me," whispered Oliver, folding his hands together; "perhaps she has sat by me. I almost feel as if she had."

"That was the fever, my dear," said the old lady mildly.

"I suppose it was," replied Oliver, "because Heaven is a long way off, and they are too happy there to come down to the bedside of a poor boy."*

It is evident that, in the mind of Charles Dickens, Oliver's thought was not given as a feverish dream, but as the surmise of an innocent soul; and that the novelist wished his readers to believe that Heaven is in reality very near, and a suffering child well worthy the attention and care of the saints in bliss.

I take another example from a popular novelist. The author of *John Halifax*, in a book called *Olive*, in describing the feelings of a young girl at the loss of her nurse: "Then, passing from the memory of Elspie once on earth, Olive thought of Elspie now in Heaven. Her glowing imagination idealised all sorrow with poesy. She never watched the sunset, she never looked up into the starry sky at night, without picturing Elspie as there. All the foibles and peculiarities of her poor old Scotch nurse became transmuted into the image of a guardian, invisible, incorporeal, which seemed to draw her own spirit nearer to Heaven, with the thought that there was one she loved, and who loved her, in the glorious mansions there."

It may be asked here, why Olive's imagination should have the effect of drawing her soul nearer to heaven, while, on the contrary, a Catholic's

* *Oliver Twist*, ch. xii.

devotion to the saints is believed by Protestants to draw away his soul from God?

The next instance is taken from an American novel, called *The Gold Hunters*, and it is merely chosen to show that amongst every class of writers, and in all kinds of unlikely places, the same instinct may be traced. In this novel a dying mother writes a letter to be read by her daughter, but only when she shall attain her eighteenth birthday. On that day, the daughter being opposed, at the inevitable crisis of a heroine's fate, by her father, who cannot bear that his child should love anyone but himself, bethinks her of her mother's letter, and reads it. "Again and again," says the author, "she read this passage. 'If your father should seize upon you as *his*, absorb you into himself as he has me, I will pray to the Heavenly Father, in Whose presence I shall be dwelling, that He may never darken your life as he has mine, that he may love you for your happiness, not for his own glory;' and as she brooded over it, her tears ceased to fall, a light came into her face, and she whispered, looking up, 'My dear mother is praying for me now; she is watching over me, softening my father's pride, blessing *our* love: Yes! she approves our love, she will plead our cause.' She stole to her father's feet, knelt and clasped her hands over his knee, looking up with a glance full of confidence; she trusted to the power of her mother up in heaven, who had said that she would watch over her at this crisis."

In Mr. W. Clark Russell's well-known novel, *The Wreck of the Grosvenor*, the hero, Edward Royle, thus addresses a Miss Robertson whose father has died at sea (the daughter cannot

bear the thought of being separated from his dead body, which the crew are anxious to consign to the deep): "'You will not be separated from him,' I answered, 'even though you should never see him more with your eyes. There is only one separation, and that is when the heart turns and the memory forgets. He will always be with you in your thoughts, a dear friend, a dear companion, a father as in life; not absent because he is dead, since I think that death makes those we love doubly our own, for they become spirits to watch over us, to dwell near us, let us journey where we please, and their affection is not to be chilled by any worldly selfishness. Try to think thus of the dead.'"*

After the shipwreck and rescue, Miss Robertson thus addresses her lover: "Since God has heard our prayers, dearest, and mercifully preserved us from death, shall we thank Him now that we are together, and say one prayer for my dear father, who, I firmly believe, looks down upon us, and has still the power to bless us."†

It need scarcely be said that the author of this work is not a Catholic by profession; though his theology, or perhaps I should say his instinct, is truly Catholic as regards prayer for the dead, and the intercession made by holy souls departed for those yet on earth.

* *Wreck of the Grosvenor*, ch. 23.

† *Ib.* ch. 31.

CHAPTER III.

TESTIMONY OF PROTESTANT POETS.

Let us turn now from prose writers to poets. It may, however, be well, in order better to bring out the nature and force of the argument, to anticipate an objection that might occur to the reader as disqualifying the class of writers whom I am about to quote. It may be said that poets write fancifully and unreally, and that no solid argument can be drawn from their utterances. To this I reply, that when they write playfully or conventionally, they certainly do not deserve to be taken seriously, and do not even claim it. No one for instance would prove the probable existence of fairies from the pretty fancies that have been put into rhyme; and perhaps the angels to many poets have not more objective reality than the fairies. But it is very different when they write on what they feel strongly, when they are raised to their best mood by the thoughts of death and immortality. It is then that the truest chord in the human heart is struck in the poet, and our own vibrates in harmony with his utterance.

I might give as a specimen of mere conventionalism an ode addressed to William the Third by George Stepney, shortly after the death of Queen Mary. He reminds the King

how Achilles revenged himself after the death of Patroclus by the slaughter of hecatombs of Trojans, and bids him do the same with the French :—

Still greater is thy loss, be such thy rage
As conquered Gallia only may assuage ;
She, who on earth secured thee by her prayer,
Returned to Heaven shall prove thy guardian angel there,
And hovering round thee with her heavenly shield
Unseen protect thee in the doubtful field.
Go then, by different paths to glory go,
The Church's both estates with Mary show,
And while above she triumphs, fight below.

Assuredly I would not quote lines like these in illustration of my theme. They are a mere reminiscence of Homer's or Virgil's goddesses, with a pretence of Christianity.

The same might be said of Dryden's address to the deceased Earl of Ossory :—

Now free from earth thy disencumbered soul
Mounts up, and leaves behind the stars and starry pole ;
From thence thy kindred legions mayst thou bring,
To aid the guardian angel of thy king.

Artificial and courtly verse like this is not poetry. It does not manifest the instincts of the heart. The writers make use of the machinery of angels, gods or fairies, without expecting their readers to believe in them.

Very different is the force of words put by a simple poetess into the mouth of a dying mother,

when the infant who has cost her life is brought to her:—

Thou wilt forget me . . . .
. . . . but unmoved
My love shall be, and with a changeless heart
I'll seek to bless thee, dearest, and to shed
Peace, honour, virtues on thy youthful head.*

These words are genuine; so too the words that the dying girl speaks to her mother, in Tennyson's *New Year's Eve*, and are full of pathos:—

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place,
Though you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;
Though I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you when ye think I'm far away.

The argument founded on lines like these is a solid one. If the Catholic Church teaches that some, at least, among the dead have a power to be near us, to know what we do, or what we say, or what we need, and power by their prayers or otherwise to succour us, such a teaching has nothing in it impious, or unhealthy, or improbable, but corresponds with the best aspirations of the human heart, especially under the influence of Christian feeling, and when touched and elevated and freed from prejudice and controversy.

Thus Cowper, writing controversially, in his

* Lines in a Juvenile Keepsake (signed M. A. J.) written before High Church doctrines were in vogue.

early poem called *Truth*, rebuked the Catholic hermit:—

His prayer preferr'd to saints that cannot aid.

But when he wrote his lines on receipt of his mother's picture, he forgot his controversial bias, and his heart spoke as follows:—

My mother, when I learned that thou wast dead
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen a kiss,
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss.

This belief in the permanence after death of pure affection begun on earth, seems to belong to all Protestant countries. We have seen an example in Germany; let me give some specimens from other lands.

A Scotch poet, William Thom, thus writes of the *Mitherless Bairn*:—

Her spirit, that passed in yon hour of his birth,
Still watches his wearisome wanderings on earth,
Recording in heaven the blessings they earn
Who couthilie deal wi' the mitherless bairn.

An Irish poetess, Mrs. Opie, is still more bold, and makes her *Orphan Boy* invoke his deceased parents to reward his benefactors:—

Lady, you weep! ah! this to me?
You'll give me clothing, food, employ?
Look down, dear parents, look and see,
Your happy, happy, orphan boy.

It will not perhaps be matter of surprise that

Bishop Ken, the celebrated non-juror, should have written the following prayer :—

O may my guardian while I sleep,
Close to my bed his vigils keep,
His love angelical instil,
Stop all the avenues of ill.

Neither will it surprise anyone that so high a churchman as the late learned Warden of East Grinsted, Dr. Neale, should have written as follows:—

Yea, the dead in Christ have still
Part in all our joy and ill;
Keeping all our steps in view
Guiding them, it may be, too.

Yet these writers say nothing that is not said by Protestants of every school. An American lady, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, in her poem called *The Other World* thus sums up the whole matter :—

It lies around us like a cloud,
A world we do not see,
Yet the sweet closing of an eye
May bring us there to be.
Sweet hearts around us throb and beat,
Sweet helping hands are stirred,
And palpitates the veil between
With breathings almost heard.
Sweet souls around us, watch us still,
Press nearer to our side;
Into our thoughts, into our prayers
With gentle helpings glide.

Certainly these words express, very clearly and beautifully, a great part of what is meant in the Catholic Church by the Communion of Saints.

CHAPTER IV.

PROTESTANTS INVOKE THEIR SAINTS.

The various passages hitherto quoted, both in prose and poetry, express belief or hope in the affection, the presence, the intervention of the dead. I say the intervention rather than the intercession, for, if the reader will look back, he will find that once only are the dead explicitly represented as conferring benefits by prayer. No doubt prayer may be supposed where it is not mentioned; yet I draw attention to this fact in the interests of charity, since Catholics have been often most unjustly blamed for imploring direct assistance from the saints, although their ordinary formula is: Pray for us. The manner in which the saints in heaven may help us, or the means by which they know our needs or our petitions, have not been defined by the Church; nor is it necessary to suppose that they have only one manner of knowing, or one manner of helping. On earth St. Paul sometimes promises his prayers; yet he also says: "I long to see you, that I may *impart* unto you some spiritual grace to strengthen you." It is not recorded that any quibbler accused him of usurping the functions of the Holy Ghost in imparting grace; though it has often been said that Catholics give Divine prerogatives to Our Lady when they simply ask her to exert her power upon their souls, without limiting the manner. It is more common to think and speak of the saints as

aiding us by prayer; yet if God has been pleased to endow them with powers not understood by us, or if He sends them sometimes on messages of mercy, as He does His holy angels, there is nothing in that to confuse in our minds the distinction between the creature and the Creator. It is surprising how naturally Protestants reconcile themselves to the thought of angelic ministries. Nothing can be more beautifully expressed or more Catholic in sentiment than the following lines of Spenser:—

And is there care in Heaven? And is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is:—else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts: but O! th' exceeding grace
Of highest God, that loves His creatures so,
And all His works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels He sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love and nothing for reward:
O why should heavenly God to men have such regard?

In these lines Spenser pre-supposes the principle that what God does through His appointed agents He does Himself. This is of course the almost universal system of His Providence in earthly matters. The love of our

earthly parents is really the love of our heavenly Father, since He appointed and created it. Magistrates and governors are God's ministers, and "he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." * Spenser very justly sees the same rule of Providence working in the ministry of angels. Why not then also in the prayers and ministry of "just souls made perfect" after death? Yet most Protestants account all trust in them as distrust of God, all power attributed to them as an encroachment on God's rights. I am not here treating the matter scripturally or theologically. There are many books that do this. I would merely wish to press home to Protestants of good will that there is inconsistency and prejudice in their distrust of the intercession or invocation of saints. Let me take another example of what Protestants hold without scruple regarding the presence and ministry of angels. Dr. Watts, in an ode on the death of a friend, exclaims:—

> Ye seraphs, that surround the throne,
> Tell how his name was in your palace known.
> 'We saw him,' say the ethereal throng,
> 'We saw his warm devotion rise,
> We heard the fervour of his cries,
> And mixed his praises with our song,
> We knew the secret flights of his retiring hours.'

I do not give these lines as an example of the invocation of angels. In the poet's intention they are, no doubt, a mere apostrophe. But why should there not be invocation? If the angels intercede, if they are so intimately present as to read our thoughts, why should not our thoughts

* Rom. xiii. 2—4.

or our words greet them, thank them, love them, and entreat their kindly offices in our behalf?

However, that Protestants do sometimes invoke saints, or those they take to be saints, without scruple, I will now show.

On opening a volume by Martin F. Tupper, the once popular prophet of low-church views, I found a sonnet inscribed to "The undying spirit of Frederic Klopstock." In this occur the lines

> I feel I love thee, brother, as I ought,
> Look down and love me too, where'er thou art.

I took up an old number of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and found an orphan maid invoking her mother, in just such words as Catholics apply to Our Lady:—

> O thou, upon whose gentle breast,
> This aching head hath often leaned,
> Thou of God's servants, holiest, best,
> My mother and my friend,
> If from the glories of the sky
> Some thoughts of thine may be beguiled,
> O look with a benignant eye
> Upon thine orphan child.*

The Rev. Thomas Rawson Taylor, a young Nonconformist minister, has a long poem addressed to his deceased sister Mary, of which several stanzas might well be mistaken by a casual reader for a Catholic poem to that Mary whose name is ever blessed.

> Mary, thou once would'st listen to my call
> And answer it with ready smiles, and now
> If on thy spirit's ear my words may fall,
> O surely from thy glory thou wilt bow,

* Lines, signed R. G., in Blackwood, Nov. 1825.

Though thou dost wear a crown upon thy brow,
Or that which honours thee as crowns do here.
Come, I am far away from home, and thou
Of all my heart's beloved art most near,
And if thou hearest not, there is not one to hear.

He goes on to imagine the care which she and a brother, also deceased, continue to take of those whom they have left on earth, and concludes a beautiful poem, entirely apposite to my theme, but too long for quotation, as follows :—

I know ye have been with us, both of you,
When o'er our spirits in their deepest grief
There came sweet thoughts of heaven, like evening dew
Upon the parched up desert.
We bid you still be with us, still attend
Our footsteps, till we step into the tomb;
So shall we never lack a present friend
Of life this dreary valley to illume,
Which scarce hath less of thick impervious gloom
Than the sad vale of death; and when we go
Forth from the night to day, and gladly plume
Our wing for glory, hail us, from the woe
Of earth, to your blest home, where tears forget to flow.*

"O proof of a soul naturally Catholic!" we may well exclaim on reading these lines. Does not this last stanza read like a conscious imitation of the *Salve Regina*, rather than the effusion of one who never in his life invoked the Blessed Virgin?

The following lines, if inferior to those last quoted in poetical beauty, are a still nearer

* From Memoirs and Select Remains of the Rev. Thomas Rawson Taylor, late classical tutor at Airedale College, Yorkshire. (Jackson and Walford, 1849.)

approach to Catholic invocation of saints. Indeed, the first stanza might have been taken from a hymn to Our Lady. They are from an address to her deceased mother by an American poetess, Anna Cora Mowatt (Ritchie).

In that happy home above
Where all perfect joy hath birth,
Thou dispensest good and love,
Mother, as thou didst on earth;
And, though distant seems that sphere
Still I feel that thou art near.

Though my longing eye now views
Thy angelic mien no more,
Still thy spirit can infuse
Good in mine, unknown before;
Still the voice, in childhood dear
Steals upon my raptured ear;

Chiding every wayward deed,
Fondly praising every just;
Whispering soft when strength I need,
'Loved one, place in God thy trust.'
O! 'tis more than joy to feel
Thou art watching o'er my weal.

This good lady had some taste of the devotion, the more than joy, felt by Catholics towards the heavenly Mother, who not only bids them, but helps them by her prayers, to put in God their trust, for that is the end and meaning of all devotion to God's saints.

Samuel Rogers was brought up a Protestant dissenter, and the brother, whose departed soul he addresses in the following lines, had lived and died a prime member of his sect—yet Rogers saw nothing incongruous in their *praying* to him:—

O thou, with whom my heart was wont to share,
From reason's dawn, each pleasure and each care;
With whom, alas! I fondly hoped to know
The humble walks of happiness below;
If thy blest nature now unites above
An angel's pity with a brother's love,
Still o'er my life preserve thy mild control,
Correct my views and elevate my soul;
Grant me thy peace and purity of mind,
Devout yet cheerful, active yet resigned.

It may be noted that the Protestant poet does not feel it necessary to say "pray for me." He boldly asks his brother to "grant" him high graces, to "correct" and "elevate" him. He leaves the mode of these influences undefined, or to be understood and fairly interpreted by candid minds. The same remark applies to the following lines addressed by Thomas Tickell to his deceased friend Addison:—

O if sometimes thy spotless form descend,
To me, thy aid, thou guardian genius, lend!
When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,
When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,
In silent whisperings purer thoughts impart,
And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart;
Lead through the paths thy virtue trod before
Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more.

This is certainly stronger language than the invocation addressed so often by Catholics to the Blessed Virgin: "Pray for us now and at the hour of our death."

An American poet, William Cullen Byrant, thus addresses his deceased wife:—

Will not thy own meek heart demand me there?
That heart whose fondest throbs to me were given?

My name on earth was ever in thy prayer,
And must thou never utter it in heaven?
Shalt thou not teach me in that calmer home
The wisdom that I learnt so ill in this—
The wisdom which is love—till I become
Thy fit companion in that land of bliss?

What is this but the prayer of the Catholic Church: "Pray for us, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ"?

When Catholics address words like these to Our Blessed Lady, they are gravely reminded that it is God Who watches over us, and that we may not give Divine prerogatives to creatures, nor do we need their aid to supplement the Providence of God.

Milton either had not learned, or for the moment forgot, these principles, when he thus apostrophised a deceased child:—

But O! why didst thou not stay here below,
To bless us with thy heaven-loved innocence,
To slake His wrath whom sin hath made our foe,
To turn swift-rushing black perdition hence,
To drive away the slaughtering pestilence,
To stand 'twixt us and our deserved smart?
But thou canst best perform that office where thou art.

Do Catholics then blaspheme, or invade God's prerogatives, or rob our Divine Redeemer of His Mediatorship, when they suppose a St. Peter or St. Paul able to do in heaven, what Milton attributes to an infant,—to ward off the chastisements we deserve, and appease the anger of God?

Perhaps more striking than any of the preceding, are some lines by Robert Southey, the poet laureate of George III. Although he was, in

his prose writings, most bitterly anti-Catholic, in his poetry he mostly forgets his bigotry, and his Protestant denunciations. He thus addresses his deceased friend, Edmund:—

Often together have we talk'd of death;
How sweet it were to see
All doubtful things made clear;
How sweet it were, with powers
Such as the cherubim,
To view the depth of heaven!
O Edmund, thou hast first
Begun the travel of Eternity;
I look upon the stars
And think that thou art there,
Unfetter'd as the thought that follows thee.

And as we often said how sweet it were
With unseen ministry of angel power
To watch the friends we loved,
Edmund, we did not err;
Sure I have felt thy presence, thou has given
A birth to holy thought,
Hast kept me from the world unstained and pure.
Edmund, we did not err;
Our best affections here
They are not like the toys of infancy,
The soul outgrows them not,
We do not cast them off;
O if it could be so,
It were indeed a dreadful thing to die!

Not to the grave, not to the grave, my soul,
Follow thy friend beloved;
But in the lonely hour,
But in the evening walk,
Think that he companies thy solitude;
Think that he holds with thee
Mysterious intercourse;
And though remembrance wake a tear
There will be joy in grief.

CHAPTER V.

COMMUNION WITH THE DEAD.

Let me recapitulate the Protestant teaching of the preceding chapters. About angelic ministrations and presence there seems to be no distrust. According to Dr. Watts, the angels read men's unspoken thoughts: "we knew the secret flights of his retiring hours;" according to Ken, "they love instil, and stop the avenues of ill;" Miss Methuen thinks they "inspire" both thoughts and feelings. Spenser thanks God for their assiduous help. Southey believes that the dead may share "the ministry of angel power." That they are at least spectators, and loving spectators, of those they have left on earth, is the testimony of Sterling, Dickens, Tennyson, Cowper, and others, though some of these writers only hazard a conjecture. That they may help us externally, protecting in danger, and warding off calamities, is believed by Stepney, Dryden, Milton, and Queen Victoria. Others go much further, and think it certain that they can influence us interiorly, infusing holy thoughts and virtuous affections. This was the belief of Mrs. Fry, of John Mason Neale, of Rogers, Tickell, Southey, Mrs. Stowe, and others. In fine, since they have these powers, since they see and hear, are very near to us, are both willing and able to help us, there seems to be no difficulty in the way of our asking them to exercise their ministry. Accordingly, Tickell invokes his deceased friend

Addison, Rogers his deceased brother, Mr. Taylor his deceased sister, in terms as explicit as were ever used by a Catholic in imploring the help of a canonised saint.

I have collected these passages rather as an eirenicon or peace-offering, than as an argument in favour of the intercession and invocation of saints. The belief in the prayers of the saints, and the practice of asking them, rest on solid grounds of scripture, tradition and theological reason, rather than on the conjecture of novelists and poets. Yet it ought to tell strongly with candid and charitable Protestants, when they find their own co-religionists of so many Christian denominations, Anglican, Scotch, and American, Presbyterian, Plymouth Brethren, Quaker, in spite of very decided anti-Catholic prejudices, drawn to believe in what they have always rejected, and to do what they have always denounced in Catholics, by the force of reason and feeling when deeply stirred, under circumstances that caused prejudice and controversy to be forgotten. Even those who like Archdeacon Hare, may disapprove of these tendencies as regards the departed, ought to mitigate the terms in which they have been wont to denounce Catholics, when they see how their censure must include some of the most honoured names among their fellow Protestants. It will not do here to say, "Ritualists are as bad as Romanists." The writers I have quoted are rather Puritans than Ritualists.

In one thing however nearly all fall short. They do not rise in their thoughts beyond human affection. There are indeed touches of Christian feeling enough to prevent their words and acts

being mere pagan ancestor-worship. The deceased are believed to have been holy on earth, and now to be dear to God; their power is supposed to be derived from Him, or exerted in prayer to Him. Yet their interest in those on earth seems to me too exclusively founded in flesh and blood. The writers ask: Can parents cease to love their children, wives their husbands, sisters their brothers, friends their friends? Among Catholics, devotion to the saints, and trust in the saints' help, go far beyond family or even national ties. The key of Catholic invocation of the saints in heaven is given by St. Paul in his invocation of the prayers of saints on earth: "I beseech you, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help me in your prayers for me to God."* We have a firm belief that our Divine Redeemer, the Mediator between God and man, is also the Mediator between the different ranks of His redeemed, whether on earth or in heaven; and that the charity of the Holy Ghost does not cease with death, but is made perfect in glory. This is the reason of our invocation of the saints. And there seem to be grounds for fearing that, unless Protestants try to rise somewhat higher in their conceptions of "kindred sympathies beyond the tomb," they may easily fall lower than the extracts here collected would indicate. There is a horde of "spiritualists" with their corresponding spirit-rappers, whose beliefs and proceedings are a very parody of the communion of saints. It has been said that this is far better than the infidelity of materialism, because it keeps alive

* Rom. xv. 30.

the belief in the immortality of the soul. Immortality! Let not the word be so debased. Immortality does not mean a mere prolongation beyond the tomb of earthly life, with its passions, its errors and its corruptions. This is not the immortality that our Lord has "brought to light." God will give "eternal life," according to St. Paul, to those who, while on this earth, "by patience in good works, seek glory and honour and incorruption."* Far better perish for ever than be converted after death into a spirit-rapper, such as the records of spiritualism depict.

I do not accuse the writers whom I have quoted of this degraded form of religion or superstition. But I fear that if they do not rise higher than the words of many of them point, higher than mere trust in the permanence of earthly love, they may drag down their dead from the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision to be invisible partakers of our earthly interests and pursuits. Southey's lines tend somewhat in this direction. His friend Edmund seems engaged in solving scientific problems, seeing "doubtful things made clear," and in studying astronomical phenomena, "viewing the depth of heaven," and travelling among the stars. Charles Dickens, who had represented little Oliver folding his hands devoutly while he thought he might have been visited by his mother, thus poured out his own heart in a letter, written in 1842 from the Falls of Niagara: "What would I give if the dear girl whose ashes lie in Kensal Green [his sister-in-law], had leave to come so far along with us! But she has been here many times, I doubt not, since her sweet

* Rom. ii. 7.

face faded from my sight."* To my mind it is grotesque and profane to think of "the dead in Christ" making tours to Niagara out of curiosity, or accompanying their relatives on such tours out of sympathy. I do not mean that the wondrous works of God or the beauties of His creation are unworthy to occupy "the spirits of the just made perfect."† But in St. Augustine's mystical interpretation of the words of Genesis—"the evening and the morning were the first day"—the shades of evening indicate the angelic vision of creation seen in itself, the rays of morning are the vision of creatures seen in God. We need not then invite the saints from their light to our darkness; nor will the reverence due to the holy dead suffer us to imagine them taking part in our picnics, however beautiful the scenery, or listening to our concerts, however exquisite the music.

In nearly all the passages that I have quoted from Protestant writers, though I find much that is true and touching, I desiderate somewhat of the higher aspects of the future life. There is more nature than grace, and the glory of the dead, though it may consist in union with God, has too little of the Beatific Vision.

Another thing strikes me as strange. These writers have a keen feeling of the enduraunce of human affection beyond the grave, and this belief is in no way rebuked by our Lord's saying that in heaven there will be neither marriage nor giving in marriage. Why then does it not occur to them that the ties knit by the Son of God on earth with His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph,

* *Life of Dickens* by J. Forster, 1, 386.

† Heb. xii. 23.

must be also everlasting? Dr. Watts, writing of a lady who died a few days after the birth and death of her first child, allowed free play to his heart and imagination, and wrote the following lines:—

> And does she seek and has she found her babe,
> Amongst the infant nation of the blest,
> And clasped it to her soul, to satiate there
> The young maternal passion, and absolve
> The unfulfilled embrace?

I think the lines are most true to nature, and not contrary to anything revealed of heaven; but I ask myself how it was that it did not occur to the writer, that the chosen Mother of God Incarnate had a maternal passion of a higher order, and an unfulfilled embrace which was at the same time the highest worship, to satiate on Him who rules the nations of the blest. Surely had the minds of Protestants not been withheld by prejudice from dwelling on such themes, they would long ago have been taught by the analogy of their own better thoughts, that what Catholics hold of Our Lady's Assumption, and their devotion to the Holy Family, are neither impious nor extravagant, but in perfect conformity with reason and with faith.

CHAPTER VI.

PROTESTANT TESTIMONY TO CATHOLIC DEVOTION.

It occurred to me, that it might be well, in the interests of charity, to see what well-read Protestants conceive to be the nature of Catholic devotion to the saints and to the Blessed Virgin. I may suppose that they all agree with Cowper that our prayers are addressed "to saints who cannot hear." If it were not so, they would doubtless themselves ask the intercession of God's friends, as so many of them appeal (as we have just seen) to their own former friends or relatives.

But what is it they suppose us to ask of the saints? Of course I do not put this question in order to discover what is in truth the nature of Catholic devotion. That is perfectly well known to us, and may be discovered by any one who will impartially study our prayer books and hymnals. The question regards the character of Protestant imaginations. Do they attribute to us petitions worthy of Christian men and women, or do they rank our prayers with those which the better class of heathen may be supposed to have addressed to their gods and goddesses? I am glad to say, that the result of my search is in favour of the candour and good sense of the higher class of modern Protestants. When Shakespeare represents the pagan, though virtuous, Imogen about to sleep, he puts the following prayer on her lips:—

To your protection I commend me, gods!
From fairies, and the tempters of the night
Guard me, beseech ye.*

When Macaulay represents the brave Horatius as about to plunge into the river, he supposes him to invoke the river-god :—

O Tiber, father Tiber,
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms
Take thou in charge to-day.

In such prayers, though the gods were fictions, the thing asked was not unworthy in itself. Such petitions might without offence have been addressed to the true God. Yet the protection implored is merely external, and a poet, true to history, would certainly not picture brave heathen man or virtuous heathen woman, asking the gods for grace or holiness. Do Protestants shut up Catholic invocation of saints in this lower level? I think not. When the banished Douglas and his fair daughter Elien are about to spend their first night in the Goblin-cave, Sir Walter Scott makes the lady sing to the harp an evening hymn, such as he conceived in harmony with the Catholic devotion of the days of James V.:—

Ave Maria! Stainless styled!
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child.†

* *Cymbeline*, Act ii. Sc. 2. † *Lady of the Lake*, Canto iii.

Certainly this is not, nor was it intended by its author to be, a specimen of the highest class of spiritual prayer addressed to Our Lady by her clients. It is a kind of exorcism. Yet it is a hymn against which a Catholic can make no charge of misrepresentation. The Blessed Virgin is not set up as an independent goddess. She is a "stainless" creature of God, and therefore has God given to her power over the foul demons, the highest degree of that power which belongs to all the just: "Thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon." And because she was a maiden and a mother, Scott rightly supposes her to be specially interested in maiden purity and filial piety.

There is a poem by Wordsworth of a more thoughtful character than Scott's hymn. In a series of ecclesiastical sonnets the poet summed up various phases of English history. As a thorough Church of England man, he could not bring himself to condemn any of the works of the so-called Reformation, nor to give positive approval to what was then rejected. On the other hand, he was sufficiently versed in mediæval literature to feel the beauty and holiness of devotion to Our Lady, and its beneficial effect upon society. In this wavering state of mind he wrote as follows of the overthrow of that devotion by the rude hands of Henry and Cranmer, Edward and Elizabeth:—

> Mother! whose virgin bosom was uncrost
> With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
> Woman! above all women glorified,
> Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
> Purer than foam on central ocean tost,
> Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn

With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast,
Thy image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven, the suppliant knee might bend;
As to a visible power, in which did blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in thee,
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrene.

"Not unforgiven!" I like to take this double negative as meaning "much approved;" just as when St. Paul, after enumerating the abuses in the Corinthian love-feasts, says: "In this I praise you not," he means, "I vehemently blame you." Otherwise forgiveness is certainly pleaded for the wrong party. Wordsworth should have sought some extenuation for the miscreants who overthrew Our Lady's images, not for the pious Catholics who knelt before them, contemplating in their souls the perfect ideal so exquisitely described, and asking, no doubt, graces fit to be asked of such an intercessor.

Side by side with Wordsworth's lovely sonnet must always be placed the lines in which Southey has depicted devotion to the Blessed Virgin, as the effect and climax of scenic beauty:—

How calmly, gliding through the dark-blue sky,
The midnight moon ascends! . . . . . .
The watchman on the battlements partakes
The stillness of the solemn hour; he feels
The silence of the earth, the endless sound
Of flowing waters soothes him, and the stars
Which in that brightest moonlight well-nigh
quenched,

Scarce visible, as in the utmost depth
Of yonder sapphire infinite, are seen,
Draw on with elevating influence
Towards eternity the attempered mind.
Musing on worlds beyond the grave he stands,
And to the Virgin Mother silently
Breathes forth her hymn of praise.

Charles Lamb appealed to Southey the poet against Southey the prose-writer, or rather he upbraided him for attaching insolent and anti-Catholic notes to poetry which derives its best inspiration from Catholic sources. In the lines just quoted, Southey was well inspired. A soul elevated to thoughts of eternity, and attempered by earthly beauty to heavenly contemplation, breathes a hymn of praise to her who brought heaven down to earth, and is God's most lovely handiwork.

These examples will suffice for my purpose. I daresay a good deal of bigotry could be quoted against them. Enough for me that men like Scott, Wordsworth and Southey witness to the spiritual beauty and elevation of Catholic devotion to the Immaculate Virgin.

CHAPTER VII.

USE OF IMAGES.

The use of images is coming back in England. If one that was rescued from destruction at the Reformation, and buried in the earth, chances to be dug up, it is carefully cleaned, and not merely looked at with curiosity, but raised aloft, if possible, and inserted in some portion of a restored church wall. New statues are made, and placed in porches or over altars.

This is not done without misgiving, and is vehemently opposed by many. There is a very strong Homily *On the Peril of Idolatry* still sanctioned by the Church of England, though rarely read aloud to the people. Historians like Hallam maintain that, though saint-worship and image-worship occupy little place in the formularies of faith and devotion of the middle ages, while the little that is said sounds innocent or specious enough, yet they were in reality the distinctive features of all worship in pre-Reformation times. Travellers point to Belgium, Spain, Italy, and South America for visible proofs of the necessary results of the use of images by the people. In vain we show them the people's catechisms on the subject, or the dogmatic treatises of theologians. "Yes (they reply), the theory is plausible. Images are the open books of the ignorant, or mere memorials to the educated, and their worship is not absolute but relative, not resting in the sign but passing

on to the thing signified. But these are subtleties for schoolmen. So strong is the tendency of the human heart to idolatry, that instructions and even warnings in catechisms or sermons are of no avail. In the mind of the simple the image gets identified with the original. You have but to watch the people at their devotions, (or even to listen to them, for they often pray aloud) and you will be convinced that the idolatry is real and gross, as gross as ever it was in pagan times. Moreover, the priests and bishops do not instruct or warn. Even your canonised bishops, like St. Charles, St. Francis of Sales, or St. Alphonsus, see this popular idolatry and never raise their voice against it. Point out even one Papal Encyclical in the last five hundred years in which the head of Western Christendom has raised his voice against these palpable and notorious abuses."

It must be confessed that these last sentences are true. The Popes have spoken strongly about many things, but not against the danger of idolatry.* Learned and saintly bishops, who feared neither kings nor people, when they thought they must admonish or condemn, have had no words of warning to their people against the abuses of image-worship. Far from rebuking, they seem to encourage the popular devotion in every way. Indeed, if the charge of idolatry could be made good, it would include the learned no less than the simple, those who are called saintly even far more than those who were careless or worldly minded. Ought not these facts to make the accuser pause?

* In particular instances both Popes and Bishops have corrected superstitions and abuses, but they have never considered the worship itself as an abuse or even a danger.

But bold accusers of their brethren will not listen to me; I am addressing myself to the perplexed inquirer, to him who neither willingly believes evil, nor would, out of mistaken charity, give his sanction to what is evil. I admit then what is said of the impressions made by images on the senses and feelings of the worshippers. But I see in them no harm whatever, nor the remotest danger of abuse. How can I make my reader share my conviction? I will put before him a parallel case. I will show him an authentic example of Protestant veneration of images. The example shall be one open to no objection. It shall be that of a thorough Protestant, with no leaning of any kind to Catholicity, of a pious Protestant, of an Englishman, a lawyer, and a scholar. It shall not be open to my reader to reply that one example proves nothing, that eccentricities may be found on all sides. No. My example, though a single one, has been before the Protestant world for more than a century. During that time it has been made very widely known, much written about, much applauded, but never once—so far as I am aware—censured or suspected, and therefore never deemed to require defence or explanation. This example, I maintain, is in all respects a parallel to Catholic popular worship, even of the extremest Neapolitan type. It is that of the English poet of the last century, William Cowper.

Here then is an extract from a letter of the poet to a cousin whom he had not seen for five and thirty years, but who had just made him a present of his mother's miniature. "Every creature," he writes, "that bears an affinity to

my mother is dear to me: and you, the daughter of her brother, are but one remove distant from her. I love you therefore, and love you much, both for her sake and for your own." So far the sentiment is natural and just, and may help to explain why Catholics conceive that God loves them for His Mother's sake, whom He has made also their mother. But Cowper continues: "The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me, as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits akin to what I should have felt had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and of course the first on which I open my eyes in the morning."

Such then is Cowper's language and conduct. It is considered as quite natural, and needing no defence or explanation, and his lines "on the receipt of his mother's picture" find a place in almost every selection of poetry made for English boys and girls, while Neapolitan peasants, who speak and act just as Cowper did, are held up with horror as examples of pagan idolatry sanctioned by a Christian Church! Italians, Neapolitans especially, are more impressionable than the English; some liberty might be granted them in words of apostrophe or signs of veneration or affection. Yet I doubt if any Neapolitan, when coming before the most venerated image of the Madonna, goes as far as Cowper, who "viewed his mother's miniature with a *trepidation* of nerves and spirits akin to what he would have felt had the dear original

presented herself to his embraces." Why may Cowper kiss his mother's picture, and a Catholic not kiss his crucifix? Why may Cowper, without suspicion of idolatry or error of any kind, address words to his picture, while a Catholic is upbraided and insulted for addressing words to his crucifix?

But does Cowper speak to his picture? He does, in the same sense in which Catholics address a statue of the Madonna. Here are his words:—

> Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
> O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
> Who bid'st me honour with an artless song,
> Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
> I will obey, not willingly alone,
> But gladly, as the precept were her own;
> And, while that face renews my filial grief,
> Fancy shall yield a charm for my relief,
> Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
> A momentary dream that *thou art she*."

Now surely the fiercest accusation against Catholic peasants never went farther than this, that in moments of excited devotion they confound the image and the reality; in other words, that they commit the crime to which Cowper pleads guilty, though he does not condemn it as a crime, but glories in it as an Elysian reverie. Do not say that ignorant Italian peasants cannot do with impunity, what a highly cultivated scholar like Cowper might indulge himself in without fear of error. Cowper himself admitted no such distinction. He seems to give the preference as regards spirituality to the minds that have been untrained in philosophy or literature:—

> No soil like poverty for growths divine,
> As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
> To them the sounding jargon of the schools
> Seems what it is—a cap and bell for fools;
> The light they walk by, kindled from above,
> Shows them the shortest way to life and love.*

My contention then is that if Protestants would put away "the jargon of their (anti-Catholic) schools," they would use images just as Catholics do; or, what would be still better, they would judge of Catholic worship with the same candour and unsuspiciousness with which they have judged for a whole century the conduct of their favourite poet.

It may perhaps be said that Cowper's devotion was not religious devotion, but civil or domestic, and that it is only religious devotion to images that is objected to. Those who will have the candour to analyse this objection will find that it can mean nothing else, than that where the question of holiness enters in, or special nearness or relationship to God, we must crush all feelings of reverence and affection, and behave towards those religious persons, or their representations and belongings, in a way that would be unnatural, cold, rude, and offensive if applied where the thought of God did not directly occur. Surely such a theory is extravagant beyond measure. Yet the decision of her Majesty's Privy Council in the "Purchas" case, was entirely founded on this distinction, a distinction derived, as the Council justly said, from the traditions of the Reformation. The rather verbose decree was summarised at the time in the fol-

* In the Poem called "Truth."

lowing lines, which are correct even if somewhat sarcastic :—

> Cross and picture freely use
> Taste or fancy to amuse ;
> But if brush or chisel brings
> Thought of God or God-like things—
> If memorials should move
> Pang of grief, or thrill of love—
> Cast th' accursed things away,
> Cranmer's gospel to obey.

However, in the instance to which I am drawing attention, the homage paid by Cowper to his mother and to his mother's picture, was certainly of a religious character.

> My boast is not that I deduce my birth
> From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;
> But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
> The son of parents passed into the skies.

Under the impressions made by his mother's picture, the poet exclaimed :—

> Blest be the art that can immortalise,
> The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim.
> Ah ! while the wings of fancy still are free
> And I can view this mimic show of thee,
> Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
> Thyself removed, thy power to sooth me left.

Let me put side by side with this, a letter of St. Alphonsus de Liguori to an artist :—

"Dear Sir,

Thanks for your good news ; you have begun the picture of our dear Mother Mary,

for the Church of the nuns at Frasso. May you finish it quickly, by the help of this tender Mother. You love the Madonna much, you say. I believe you, dear Paul, but you must cause this love to pass into the hearts of others. Finish your picture quickly, and the Madonna will be loved by many souls."*

Are not the principles of the Englishman and of the Neapolitan identical as regards the value and use of images? Cowper, it is true, writes of the picture of his earthly mother; St. Alphonsus of that of his heavenly mother. But that is not the present question. They were agreed as to the use of images.

* Letter, May 12th, 1765.

CHAPTER VIII.

FETISH WORSHIP.

It is right here to anticipate what may be felt as a difficulty by some. Pictures and statues vary much in their power as images, in their fitness to convey a representation of their original to the human mind. Few will question the beneficial effect as teachers of the masterpieces of great artists. The late Richard Chevenix Trench, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, a man of much refinement, after contemplating a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by Murillo, wrote the following lines :—

> What innocence, what love, what loveliness,
> What purity must have familiar been
> Unto thy soul before it could express
> The holy beauty in that visage seen.

Such pictures as these, it will be readily admitted, are teachers of grace and truth to all who have eyes to see. But the larger number of images have no such power, they are not works of art at all. They are poor daubs, or rude, repulsive forms, often large waxen dolls without expression, and dressed in ungraceful draperies. Sometimes a cylinder, or truncated cone, serves to stretch out robes of thick embroidery, and this is the body of the statue. These robes are changed at the various feasts or seasons, as well as the crown that decorates the head of the image. The image itself, or the face, has no beauty of any kind,

natural or spiritual. Indeed, many of the so-called miraculous pictures or statues sink to a still lower level. They are little black images, paltry prints, or pictures so old that the traces of the features have almost or quite disappeared. Such things will be found all over Europe, in Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy and France, as well as in South America.

Now, it will be asked impatiently or scornfully, what can be said in defence of such things as these? Some Catholics would reply that nothing can or should be said; that all such images should be destroyed, that pure Christian art should be cultivated, under whose influence such barbarisms would pass away, as provincial dialects and bad grammar give way to the spread of good literature. But I do not care to discuss questions of Christian art. I am concerned with popular devotion, as sanctioned or at least tolerated by the Catholic Church. Now the Council of Trent has severely condemned everything indecent in pictorial representations, and has committed this matter to the vigilance of bishops. But bishops have never understood that they are simply patrons of high art, or that it is their duty to destroy old and unsightly objects of devotion, or to discourage devotion to such objects.

This being the case—as it is notoriously the case—in what (it is asked) does such devotion differ from the degraded fetish-worship of the Africans? I reply that it differs altogether. A fetish is a meaningless or arbitrarily selected emblem and instrument of magical power. By magical power I mean some unknown or mysterious power of nature or of demons, which men either render innocuous, or make subser-

viant to their own interests and passions, by incantations or rites which have no connection with holiness or with the one true God. But the power of Our Blessed Lady or of the saints is in no sense magical. It is the power of God's friends with Him who delights to honour and reward their faithful service. Again, the image of the saint, however poor as a work of art, or inadequate as a representation, is essentially connected with the memory of the saint. It may not be capable of being a teacher of the ignorant, but it is perfectly adapted to be a reminder to the well-informed. And the spiritual information is conveyed to the Catholic multitudes who frequent places of devotion or pilgrimage by innumerable books and sermons. It is a gross stupidity to confound things essentially different because of a superficial resemblance, to confound Balaam and our Blessed Lord because they both rode upon an ass; or the amulets of the goddess Diana with the miraculous objects taken from the body of St. Paul.* It may be freely admitted that many of the Madonnas specially venerated are in themselves rude, grotesque, indistinct or obliterated; but the devotion to the Blessed Virgin which has surrounded them for so many ages is not grotesque or indistinct. The comparison then of the veneration of these old images with fetish-worship and idolatry is singularly feeble, and may be set aside.

Yet, as I wish to deal as fairly with this subject as possible, and to shirk no objection, I will quote at length the testimony against

* Acts xix. 11, 12. Ib. 19, 25.

Catholic worship as stated by a gentleman who had won some reputation as a man of science and professor of logic. I find the following passage in a letter written from Lima in South America by the late Mr. W. Stanley Jevons of the London University:—

"The Roman Catholic religion, imported from Spain here, gained vast power, wealth and extension among a population formed to a great extent of native Indians, low in the scale of intelligence, and of negroes who are worse. As a consequence, the religion became debased into something which I can only regard as a bad form of idolatry. The churches are remarkable in an architectural point of view for an extreme and absurd abundance of ornament and colours, but the altars inside, before which the people worship, are what excite and disgust one most. They consist of large complicated erections, gilded and profusely covered with carving in every part. Often they are loaded with large quantities of pure silver, in the form of candlesticks and of ornaments of senseless and indescribable form. When silver was not to be had, the commonest tinsel was substituted. The eyes are indeed attracted and dazzled by this tawdry and barbarous pile of decorations, but they rest with disgust upon the images which are placed in the niches and peep out from every side; the Virgin Mary with a gilded crown, and a dress of bright yellow silk embroidered with a mass of gold or tinsel lace; Christ Himself represented by a barbarous wooden figure, nearly naked, and showing wounds, and streams of blood; and the Apostles clothed in robes of velvet, with the usual profuse and tawdry decorations.

"Such are the objects before which crowds of women, white, brown, or black in complexion, and even men, may be seen kneeling and praying at all hours of the day, while other women are murmuring their confessions to old priests who sit easily in the confessional boxes.

"But it would be impossible to give you a complete idea of the curious general aspect of these old Roman Catholic edifices, the gloomy vaulted naves, the ghastly images, the old and rude pictures, which startle you at every step, the antiquated organs, the great screens of double iron bars which separate off the chapel in which the nuns or monks attend the service. In the monasteries, again, you may roam through courtyard after courtyard, along gloomy long passages, and up great staircases, passing every now and then a small chapel enclosed by a lattice door, within which a solitary lamp burns before the tarnished old altar and its images, in evidence that it is not quite neglected. All these strange edifices, built of vast masses of sun-dried bricks and tried by many an earthquake, have the evidence of decay, and one is almost glad to see that the tarnished altar-piece is not regilded, and the fallen image often not replaced. Where might one see idolatry if not in Lima? Who would be a Christian, if this is Christianity?" *

This is certainly an impetuous sally. It would clearly be useless to wave a flag of truce before the eyes of so angry an assailant. But let me ask any fair-minded reader to go through this indictment carefully with me. First we must distinguish between two

* Letters and Journal of W. Stanley Jevons (1886), p. 136.

very different charges, that of bad taste and that of idolatry. An image does not become an object of idolatry because it is badly decorated. Supposing that Cowper was right in kissing his mother's picture, and placing it in his room where his eyes would fall on it at first awaking; his friends would have had no right to quarrel with him about the shape of his picture frame, or the pattern of his wall-paper. That was his affair not theirs, and if they did not like it, he might have replied that he did not choose it for them. Even so the people of South America are not bound to conform to our canons of taste in architecture or church decoration. Or if they are quite wrong in æsthetics, they are not on that account guilty of "a bad form of idolatry," though a master of logic tell us so.

But this gentleman was evidently in a peevish mood, when he went to spy the religion of the South Americans. He finds fault with the churches for their "absurd abundance of colours," as well as for "their gloomy vaulted naves." He is equally averse from "long passages," and from "great staircases." If the ornaments of the altar are of solid silver, he is angry at the waste; if they are of "tinsel" he is equally angry at the parsimony. He is displeased with some images because they are dressed, with others because they are naked. Show him a martyr as he suffered on earth, or the King of martyrs as He died on the Cross, the representation is "ghastly" and "barbarous." Our Lady and the Apostles are dressed in silk or velvet, to represent to simple minds their royalty in heaven; to him they are "tawdry" and "disgusting."

He appears even to be angry with the wor-

shippers because they are "white, brown and black," as if that also was a specimen of their bad taste, or a piece of their superstition, and not rather a proof of the Church's Catholicity, of her adaptation to all races and classes, and her refusal to make distinction of ranks before her altars. Brown skins and black would not be seen in a fashionable church in New York; nor do rich and poor kneel promiscuously on the floor of churches in Belgravia.

Had Mr. Jevons found only women frequenting the churches, he would doubtless have written something uncomplimentary to the female sex under Catholic influence; but as there were men too, he was convinced of the low state of intelligence of the whole population of Lima. It moved his bile to find the people "praying at all hours of the day," a circumstance that would have edified anyone in a better humour. He is scandalized because he sees the old priests sitting "easily" in the confessionals. What would he have? Must they sit uneasily? He would assuredly have noted an evidence of a guilty conscience.

To come to the point—in all this, where is his proof of idolatry, and of a bad form of idolatry? Was his a fitting mood in which to form a candid judgment about idolatry? Could such an observer tell whether the thoughts rested in the image or passed on to the saint, rested in the saint or passed on to God? Mr. Jevons was bred a Socinian, and was throughout his life a disbeliever in prayer. Was such a man competent to form a conception of the character or tendency of the prayers of a Catholic people before a crucifix or a Madonna? Against his

accusation I will set the testimony, not of a Catholic apologist, but of another Protestant, and he shall, like Balaam, bless when he would rather curse.

Few writers of the present century have been so bitterly hostile to Catholics as Robert Southey. Though, as I have said in a previous chapter, the best things in his poems are derived from Catholic inspiration, yet, even at a sacrifice of all rules of art, he cannot forbear spoiling their effect, by adding notes in prose, or by introducing his Protestantism as a jarring note into his Catholic poetry. Thus, in his *Tale of Paraguay*, having to speak of the devotion of the Indians to St. Joachim, the father of the Blessed Virgin, he writes:—

> There on the altar was his image set,
> The lamp before it burning night and day,
> And there was incensed, when his votaries met
> Before the sacred shrine, their beads to say,
> And for his fancied intercession pray.
> Devoutly as in faith they bent the knee,
> Such adoration they were taught to pay;
> Good man, how little had he weened that he
> Should thus obtain a place in Rome's idolatry.

Thus, while he is intent on drawing an interesting picture of the Indians, his hatred of their Jesuit instructors makes him throw in a sneer and an accusation of idolatry. Then his better genius comes to his aid, and he writes as follows:

> But chiefly there the Mother of our Lord,
> His blessed daughter, by the multitude
> Was for their special patroness adored.
> Amid the square on high her image stood,
> Clasping the Babe in her beatitude,
> The Babe Divine on whom she fixed her sight;

And in their hearts, albe the work was rude,
It raised the thought of all-commanding might,
Combined with boundless love and mercy infinite.

Let my reader candidly examine how these two stanzas hang together. Southey acknowleges—indeed he was forced by overpowering historical evidence to acknowledge—that *even a rude statue* raised thoughts of the most spiritual order concerning the divine attributes. It could not have done this had not the Indians been well instructed in Christian doctrine, and filled with sublime thoughts, ready to be awakened by any object that would recall the Christian Mysteries. Yet in the same breath Southey denounces "Rome's idolatry," and sneers at the "fancied intercession" of the saints, as if he had some private revelation from God that the saints do *not* intercede for their brethren on earth. We have seen in the previous chapter, that Southey, when he forgot for the time his anti-Catholic prejudices, could invoke his dead friend, and made sure that his friend watched over him and helped to elevate and sanctify his soul.

To sum up: We have seen that Protestants when moved by strong and tender feelings can use images, and make demonstrations to them or before them, such as they would make to the originals. They have no right then to suspect Catholics of idolatrous tendencies because of external forms and manners of devotion. They have no right to quarrel with Catholics because their images are often rude and tasteless. Images are not honoured either for their material or as works of art. If they serve to awaken the mental image, they suffice. When their rudeness or dimness is the result of their antiquity, the very associa-

tions that have gathered round them, and the graces that have been obtained by prayer before them, well account for their popularity.

I have brought unexceptionable Protestant testimony that the thoughts excited or awakened in the Catholic worshippers are high and holy. Religious images it is true would be of no aid to a well-instructed Protestant in his suspicious mood; but that mood is unnatural, and acquired from a hateful and calumniating tradition. Nor would images of our Lord and His saints teach anything to an ignorant Protestant population; but that is the misfortune of the people unfamiliar with the great mysteries of Redemption, and utterly unacquainted with the fruits of the Redemption in the lives and deaths of Apostles martyrs, confessors and virgins.

We have heard accusations of Rome's idolatry multiplied, yet even the accusers bear witness to the spirit of devotion that pervades the Catholic people. If their prayers or hymns are addressed to the Virgin, it is because they see in her the channel through which the "all-commanding might," "the boundless love and mercy infinite" of their Divine Redeemer delights to pour itself out on men.

It seemed grotesque to Southey that St. Joachim, Our Lady's father, should be honoured in Paraguay, and he amused himself by the thought of the surprise that it would have caused the "good man" could he have foreseen it. Mr. Southey might have recalled the words of St. Joachim's daughter, at least: "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed," words which were not a conjecture, nor an aspiration, but an inspired prophecy, the full meaning

of which, like that of all prophecies, can only be understood in its fulfilment. That fulfilment might well include the people of Paraguay and Lima, but by no possibility could it include Mr. Southey or Mr. Jevons. May the writer of this little Flag of Truce be included in it, and all his readers!

And now, dear Protestant reader, if you have gone with me so far, and are satisfied—I will not say with our doctrine of the communion of the saints, or our manner of devotion—but satisfied that the matter is worthy of further dispassionate inquiry, remember that I have purposely chosen an unlikely subject. It was not *a priori* likely that I should find, in turning over the pages of a miscellaneous assortment of modern Protestant books, testimonies in favour of what are generally thought such distinctively Catholic practices as the invocation of saints, and the use of images.

Had I chosen the use of relics, the importance of good works, merit, sin, pardon, heaven, my task would have been much easier. Consider then whether it may not be worth your while to make yourself acquainted with Catholic doctrines and practices from our own books, not from those of our enemies.*

* Should the reader wish to pursue the inquiry, he can easily obtain a list from a Catholic bookseller. But first of all I would advise him to procure a copy of our Catechism (price one penny), which he can obtain from the publishers of this little work.

St. Helen.

By M. E. James.

It was to St. Helen, the mother of the first Christian Emperor of Rome, that the great happiness was vouchsafed of discovering and restoring to the world the Cross on which our Saviour died. This favoured lady was of British origin, and it was natural therefore that she should be held in great veneration by the Welsh Chroniclers, and that the greatest treasure of the British people in the old days should have been the "Croes Naid," the Cross of Refuge, part of the real Cross, "brought into Britain by St. Neot, and treasured among the Regalia of Wales. This relic was gilded and adorned with precious stones, gold and silver" (this probably refers to the reliquary), "and was carried on great occasions before the Prince of Wales." *

But before we inquire further into the history of this particular relic, let us pursue the life of the great saint and Empress "Venerabilis et Piissima Augusta," who was permitted to find the source of these treasures.

Helen was born about the year 250. She was the

* Arch. Camb.

only daughter of Coël, a British king who resided at Colchester, which he made his capital, surrounded with walls, beautified in many ways, and named after himself, Coël-castra; the site of his house is still pointed out by the people of Colchester, who are justly proud of the great Empress, and who, in honour of her, still bear for their arms a cross between four crowns.

Coël lived on friendly terms with the conquering Romans, paying tribute to them for permission to rule in peace, and they on their part frightening off Goth, Viking, and Dane from that unprotected coast. Colchester was then, as now, an important military station, and we know that at one time part of the twentieth legion were quartered there; a very perfect little stone statue of a Centurion * was dug up out of a garden a few years ago, and is preserved in a private museum; the armour and all the details of the costume are most accurately given. It might indeed serve as a model for the young Roman officer, Flavius Constantius, who was quartered at Colchester about the time that the young Princess had blossomed into fair womanhood. Constantius appears to have been lodged in the palace, a very probable fact, considering his birth, for he was descended from the Emperor Claudius II., and from Vespasian, from whom he bore the prænomen Flavius. He had also another name, by which he is better known, according to the quaint Roman custom, still common in Italy, of adding some rather personal adjective to the proper nouns legally borne. In this case the adjective was Chlorus or pale, alluding no doubt to the young man's complexion. With regard to Constantius, however, it did not indicate ill-health; he was tall, well-made, and handsome, a good soldier, and devoted to his profession. It is not surprising that an attachment sprang up between the young people, and they were married, no doubt much to the satisfaction of the old king.

This marriage was for many years a very happy one;

* Marcus Favonius, surnamed *Facilis* or easy, *i.e.*, good-natured. The statue belongs to Mr. George Joslin, the owner of the museum.

their only child, a son, born at York, soon gave promise of his future greatness, and it is said Helen herself superintended his early education. Constantius Chlorus seems to have been truly attached to wife and child till a glittering bait was held before him, and his ambition triumphed over his affection.

It must be remembered that he was a pagan, and that it is only the Christian religion that has exalted woman and sanctified the contract of marriage. Some who call themselves Christians outside of the Catholic Church allow of divorce, and this sometimes for most trivial reasons: we cannot therefore be surprised that pagans had very lax ideas on this subject: and Constantius was by religion a philosopher.

In every respect, except in his repudiation of his wife, he showed himself a just man; and the well-known story of his treatment of his Christian servants proves him to have been possessed of an unusual amount of common sense. When the edicts against the Christians were ordered to be carried out in Britain, Constantius Chlorus had to publish the decree: he began with his own household. He read the imperial order, and required all his officers and servants to offer sacrifice to the gods or resign their posts: he gave them a few days to reflect and decide. At the appointed time and place they all assembled, and then severally made their decisions; we can picture the varied expressions in the faces of the crowd—avarice, cowardice, heroism, all plainly depicted—above all, the gleam of humour, that must have lighted up the pale face of Constantius as he watched them. When it was over, the Roman spoke shortly and decisively. All the men who had bartered conscience for place were dismissed from his service, but the pagans and the Christians he retained—in fact, his body-guard was entirely composed of the latter, so convinced was he of their loyalty.

But to return to his own want of loyalty to his wife, we must recollect that at this time there were two Emperors, Dioclesian and Maximian Herculeus, and

that they now, in A.D. 293, resolved to associate with themselves two Cæsars to assist in their wars and in the government of distant countries, and who should hold almost the position of heirs presumptive of the imperial dignity. Dioclesian chose Galerius on condition he would divorce his wife and marry the Emperor's daughter Valeria; Maximian selected Constantius, and he made a like condition: the new Cæsar must divorce Helen and marry Theodora, the widow of Maximian's son.

The bait was too tempting: the dignity of Cæsar at once, the imperial purple to follow, was too much even for a philosopher to resist; and Helen shortly found herself in the bitter and most undeserved position of a repudiated wife.

The character of St. Helen has always been remarkable for its quiet dignity, and no doubt she bore this cruel blow with patient fortitude; this we may safely assume, recollecting the task that was afterwards entrusted to her. But she had been for more than twenty years a wife when this divorce took place in 293, and her son was not near her to console her with his devotion. His father had—much against his will—been obliged to send him as a hostage to Dioclesian, and the young prince was detained at Nicomedia, or wherever the Emperor chose to reside, as a pledge for his father's fidelity. Constantine grew up in the midst of his enemies, yet this had no bad effect on a naturally fine character, but probably only rendered him more manly and self-reliant.

Constantius lived about fourteen years after the divorce; for thirteen of them he reigned as Cæsar, and then, when Dioclesian was forced to put off the purple on May 1st, 305, for rather over a year Constantius Chlorus enjoyed the dignity of being Emperor; but during all that time his failing health and his son's absence tried him sorely. The persecution of the Christians, too, during the latter part of Dioclesian's reign, must have troubled him; but he was powerless to prevent it. The missioners of Pope Eleutherius,

who had been sent in answer to the appeal of King Lucius, in 169, had introduced the Faith of Christ into Britain. Even before that, Christianity had been brought to this island by some members of the family of Caractacus, who had been taken in chains to Rome, but liberated and kindly treated by Claudius, out of respect to whom the British chief gave his daughter Eurgain the name of Claudia. This lady married Pudens the younger, the son of the Senator Quintus Cornelius Pudens, at whose house on the Viminal (now the Church of St. Pudentiana), a most interesting group must often have assembled, comprising St. Peter, St. Paul, Linus, Cletus, Caractacus, his aged father Brân the Blessed, his daughter Claudia, Pudens, her husband, and their four children Timotheus, Novatus, Pudentiana and Praxedes, besides the master of the house and his wife Priscilla. Of these, some certainly returned to Britain to spread there the Faith they had learnt from the Prince of the Apostles: among them the old king Brân ap Llyr, Claudia, and Pudens, whose names are inscribed on the Chichester stone, and later on, their son Timotheus, a priest, who laboured for some years to spread the Faith, then returning to Rome, was martyred.

So there were many thousands of Christians in Britain at the time of Dioclesian, and many fine churches; Constantius pulled down the buildings, but tried, as far as he could, to spare the people, but in spite of him, blood flowed like water on every side.

In Caerleon alone ten thousand martyrs were slaughtered. As soon as he was Emperor, Constantius ordered these cruel edicts to be annulled in Britain. Perhaps it was because of this leniency, so unusual in a Roman Emperor, that a very great grace was granted to Constantius Chlorus before he died, the grace of Faith in the One True God. Whether St. Helen was with him in his last hours is not known, but it is stated that he longed greatly to see his eldest son. Theodora had borne him two sons and two daughters, but on his death-bed

his heart turned to his first-born. Constantine returned his father's devotion, and pleaded hard with Galerius to be allowed to return to Britain, but the Emperor was too jealous of him to allow him out of his sight. At length the young man—backed by a letter from his father which threatened war in case of refusal—extorted leave from Galerius to start next day for Britain. But Constantine did not wait for the next day. He set off at once, and few things are more exciting to read of than the young man's rush across Europe with an irate Emperor behind him, and before him—a dying father. He had truly reason for haste. Galerius was furious at his sudden departure; he had meant to find some excuse for stopping him on the morrow, or at the worst to have him intercepted in Italy by the Cæsar, Severus. But our British prince was too quick for him, and he was wily enough to take up all the horses at the various stages, so as to render an effectual pursuit impossible. We are told that Constantine was "well formed in mind and body," and both were certainly well tested in this gallop across a continent, with dangers on every side. Winds and waves were propitious to him, and he reached York in time to receive his dying father's blessing. Constantius recommended his son to his soldiers, and presented him to the assembled senators and councillors with these words:

"I leave you my son as my successor in this Empire. With God's assistance he shall wipe away the tears of the Christians, and avenge the tyranny practised against them. In this, above all, do I place my hopes of felicity."*

Surely that blessing—which was a prophecy—was worth the peril and fatigue of that quick ride.

Constantius died on the 25th of July, 306, and Constantine was at once saluted Emperor by the army. He was greatly beloved by the soldiers, being a thorough soldier himself, "with a genius for war," we are told; and Galerius dared not thwart the Legions, so he

* Soames, Britannia Antiqua, p. 314.

received the little laurel-crowned image of the new Emperor according to the Roman custom, though he affected to consider him only a Cæsar, not an Emperor. But this wretched man had nearly reached the end of his tether; he died a most fearful death, consumed by worms, in 311.

Now we reach the turning point in Constantine's life, and also in that of his mother, for it is said that her son's conversion led to hers, though if Eusebius had not expressly stated this, we should have been much more inclined to believe that she had been born a Christian, as so many of the Royal line had been since the time of Brân and Lucius. But Constantine was still, in the year 312, a pagan, or at least unbaptized, though we may believe his father's dying words uttered six years before sometimes haunted him. These six years had wrought a marvellous change in the life of Helen. No longer the repudiated wife, she now held the proud position of mother of the Emperor,—and her devoted son, as if to make up to her for past slights and sufferings, showered upon her honours and dignities. Medals were struck in her honour, "Flavia Julia Helena," and she was proclaimed Augusta (Empress) throughout the army —which meant throughout the known world. The prosperity of Constantine roused the jealousy of his colleagues, and Maxentius, son of the late emperor Maximian, declared war on him. The opposed forces met near Rome, Maxentius having a great numerical superiority. Constantine encamped his men near the Pons Milvius (Ponte Molle), two miles outside the present Porta del Popolo. This was the scene of perhaps the most wonderful and best attested miraculous appearance ever given to the world—for not only did the Emperor behold this manifestation, but it was seen by his whole army.

Shortly before noon on the 28th of October, 312, Constantine had knelt down—and doubtless his soldiers had followed his example—to invoke aid in his extremity. But whose aid? His mind turned to the God of the

Christians, of Whom his dying father had spoken, and he prayed to Him to reveal Himself and to give him victory. His prayer was answered suddenly and completely. There appeared in the sky—the broad sky overhanging the flat campagna broken by nothing but the great pile of Hadrian's Mausoleum and the columns and obelisks of Rome, for as yet the domes of the Churches were not,—in this wide sky there suddenly flashed out the sign of the Son of God; a cross of fire appeared in the blue, cloudless heavens, and underneath it, in Greek characters, were the words "*In hoc signo vinces*"—Through this sign thou shalt conquer.

On the following night he was ordered by our Lord in a vision to make a representation of the cross and the words, and to use it as an ensign in battle. This banner was the world-famous Labarum, so much dreaded by the enemies of the cross. Constantine, as we all know, gained a complete victory over Maxentius, who, in his flight across the Tiber, was drowned, being thrown into the water by the breaking of a bridge of boats. All these events have been painted by Raphael in the Sala of Constantine in the Vatican.

This decisive victory was hailed with joy in Rome, the Senate caused the Arch of Constantine to be erected in honour of the conqueror, and a statue of him in armour holding a large cross was also set up, with this inscription on the base: "By this salutary sign, the mark of true courage, I have delivered your city from the yoke of tyranny, and restored the senate and people of Rome to their ancient glory."

Eusebius says that the Empress Helen followed her son, and about this time became a Christian: she was now over sixty years of age, but her vigour of mind and body were unimpaired, and she assisted the Emperor in all good works: widows and orphans were helped, maidens were portioned, the poor—pagans and as well as Christians—were cared for, and churches were built. Among these were the splendid one at Nicomedia, the "Golden Church" at Antioch, built in the form of an

octagon, and the beautiful church of the Twelve Apostles at Constantinople, which "was vastly high; yet had all its walls covered with marble, its roof overlaid with gold, and the outside covered with gilded brass instead of tiles."* Helen had a palace in this city, in which she resided after her son had become Emperor of the East as well as of the West by his victories over Licinius. He prepared himself for these battles by prayer and fasting; his standard, the imperial Labarum, was carried before his army, and his soldiers triumphed beneath the banner of the Cross, especially at Adrianople, and in the great battle of Chalcedon, in 324, which rendered him absolute master of the world.

These victories in the East prepared the way for what was to be the great object of St. Helen's life, that life which, in spite of her exalted station, was so hidden that it is difficult to find out the exact facts about it, except in the last act of it. In 326, being the twenty-first year of Constantine's reign, the thirteenth of the pontificate of Sylvester, and the first after the first General Council of the Church at Nice, St. Helen was divinely inspired to go to the Holy Land, and search for the Cross of Christ, that Cross whose appearance in the sky had converted her son, and whose image on the banner had led him to victory. Despite the weight of nearly eighty years, St. Helen hastened to obey, and, with the resources of the Roman Empire at her feet, found no difficulties except her own age and infirmity. When she arrived at Jerusalem she was welcomed gladly by the holy bishop Macarius, to whom Constantine had written of the search to be made for the holy Cross, and of the building of a magnificent church on Mount Calvary. The aged Empress spared no pains to find out where the Cross might be buried, for the place was not then known, and she consulted many persons as to the most probable spot where to begin the excavations; she was advised to discover the position of the Sepulchre, as it was the Jewish custom to dig a large hole near the

* Eusebius.

place where a malefactor was buried, and to throw into it all the instruments of his execution—these being unclean. Helen succeeded in discovering where the Sepulchre was, though the place had been completely concealed by the Jews, a very large heap of stones and earth having been heaped over it, the whole being surmounted by a large statue of Venus, so that any respect given to this holy place by the Christians might appear to be paid to the heathen goddess whose cultus was of all others the most removed from the pure precepts of Christ. The Emperor Hadrian had set up this statue. "This he did as conceiving that the root and foundation of the Church would be destroyed if idols were worshipped in those places where Christ was born in order to suffer." *

In the end, the statue served a good purpose by directing the attention of the seekers of the Cross to the right spot. An army of workmen was ordered to throw down the Venus and clear away the great mound. Earth, stones and statue were thrown into the valley beneath, and after digging to a great depth, they were rewarded by discovering the holy Sepulchre, and soon after, near it the three crosses which had lain there for nearly three centuries. This took place on the 3rd of May, 326.

We can imagine the joy of the Empress and of the Bishop, and all the Faithful at this sight. But a difficulty still remained; there were three crosses, and though the title, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" cut in Hebrew, Greek and Latin letters lay near, yet it was not attached to either cross, and the mark of the nails which had fixed it was not considered sufficient proof. A lady belonging to one of the chief families in Jerusalem, lay dying in that city, and the holy Bishop Macarius caused the three crosses to be carried to her house, and after earnest prayer that God would reward their faith, he applied the crosses in succession to the dying woman. The two first pro-

* St. Paulinus, Epist.

duced no effect, but at the touch of the true Cross she was healed. She rose, restored to health and life, by one touch of the "blessed wood, by which justice cometh."*

Thus "without difficulty Elen found the cross of Christendom." St. Ambrose says: "She adored not the wood, but the King, Him Who hung on the wood. She burned with an earnest desire of touching the remedy of immortality."

Death and sin had come into the world by the fruit of the wood, plucked by Eve. Life and love were the gifts of the divine fruit hanging on the wood, Jesus born of Mary. The gratitude and love of Helen took an outward form—as true things usually do—in the beautiful church which she immediately began to build over the holy place where these relics had been found, and which was called the Basilica of the Holy Cross. It extended over a very large area, and one chapel of it stood over the cavern given by Joseph of Arimathea for the burial of our Lord's Body, and this was called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the rock Golgotha, and the very place where the Cross had stood was covered by this great building, which Constantine enriched with many treasures. Its greatest treasure was the large piece of the Cross which, enclosed in a rich silver shrine, St. Helen gave to the care of St. Macarius and his successors. At the completion of the great church of the Holy Cross, this relic was placed there with the utmost solemnity on the 14th of September, 335.

This feast, called the Exaltation of the Cross, is still and always has been kept by the Catholic Church. The feast of the Finding† of the Holy Cross is held on the day when it occurred, on the 3rd of May, and has been so held from the time of its happy discovery by our country-woman.

* Wisdom xiv. 7.

† Sometimes called the Invention. The meaning of the Latin word *invenire* has been partly perverted in English; it signifies *to discover.*

Another part of the Cross she carried to her son at Constantinople, who received it with great veneration, and the third part she bore to Rome, where she caused the church "of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem" to be built to receive this treasure—where it still remains: she also brought earth from Jerusalem of which part of the floor is composed. But the aged Empress did not live to see the completion of any of these works. When the third portion of the Cross was safely deposited in the capital of the world, St. Helen rested from her labours. She died in the arms of her son on the 18th of August, 326, on which anniversary her feast is kept.

She appears to have breathed her last in a palace outside Rome, for Eusebius says that her son caused her body to be conveyed to the city with royal magnificence. Her remains were interred with the utmost pomp in the vast mausolæum on the Via Labicana, about one mile and a half from the Porta Maggiore, on the way to Palestrina; this place is now called Torre Pagnatarra; she was buried in a large sarcophagus—the largest known—of red Egyptian porphyry; it was removed by Anastasius IV. (about 1150) to the Lateran; and from thence to the Vatican, where it now is, by Pius VI. (about 1775). It is covered with high-reliefs representing a battle—no doubt that of Pons Milvius, portraits of St. Helen and Constantine, and other subjects. It was much damaged when removed to the Vatican, and the restoration of it cost £20,000, which gives an idea of its value. The ashes of St. Helen are said to be kept in a rich shrine under the Altar of the Chapel dedicated to her in the church of the Ara Cœli—a singular proof of the triumph of Christianity over Paganism, for this church on the Capitol occupies the site of the Temple of Jupiter—whose statue on Mount Olivet Helen had cast down when at Jerusalem—and the Altar in her chapel stands just where the *Ara primogeniti Dei* was erected, the altar placed there by Augustus in consequence of the prophecy of the Cumæn Sibyl

regarding the birth of our Lord. Jupiter was overthrown and the unknown God had revealed Himself.

The personal character of Helen scarcely requires comment, the fact that she was selected by God for so great a work is enough. Yet we may particularly note her modesty and humility. Though she was, during the latter part of her life and in her death, surrounded by the pomp and magnificence required by her rank and the loving care of her son, yet in herself she was one of the humblest of the servants of Christ. Eusebius says: "In the sight of all she continually resorted to the churches, and she adorned the sacred buildings with the richest ornaments and embellishments, not passing by the chapels of the meanest towns, appearing amid the women at prayer in a most humble garment." Rufinus calls her faith and holy zeal incomparable, and St. Gregory the Great says she "kindled a like fire in the hearts of the Romans." She built a convent for holy virgins at Jerusalem, and "though empress of the whole world, and mistress of the empire, she looked upon herself as servant of the hand-maids of Christ."

A very human touch in St. Helen was the interest she took in soldiers and the great kindness she showed them. Perhaps her memory took her back to the happy days in Colchester, when her soldier-lover appeared in the midst of the twentieth legion.

The three portions of the Cross were, as we have seen, deposited by St. Helen herself at Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Rome: the title—a piece of wood a foot long, the surface whitened, the inscription cut in it in red letters in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—she gave to the same church in Rome, the Holy Cross: one of the nails was placed in the diadem of the Emperor, surrounded with pearls, which he only wore on very solemn occasions; another his loving mother had fixed in a jewelled bridle to be used when he went into battle; the third she cast into the Adriatic when, in great danger of shipwreck, while on her way from Constantinople to Rome accompanied by the Emperor—and the storm

ceased. St. Gregory of Tours says that up to his day sailors considered that sea as holy, and entered it with prayer and fasting. The lance was found with the cross and was kept at Jerusalem, as Ven. Bede and other writers mention; it was afterwards taken to Rome, but the point is in the Sainte Chapelle at Paris.

Much misconception arises from a false idea of the size of these relics, and most of the people who indulge in jokes of the "three-decker" description have never seen a relic of the Holy Cross, and consequently do not know what tiny fragments these are. We should be sorry to have to set to sea in a frigate constructed of pieces of wood the size of all the united relics of the Cross; Robault Fleury measured all he could find, and his work on the subject makes it morally certain that not one third of the True Cross is now to be found in the whole world. There is wood enough in the Cross for the bark of Peter—and safer sailing in it than in the three-decker of lively imaginations.

We have already referred to the relic of the Cross—the Croes Naid—which our British forefathers regarded as their greatest treasure and of which they deplored the loss when "Einion ab Ivor, Davydd ab Gronwy and others, having betrayed their prince, Davydd, brother to the last Llewelyn, to Edward I. then at Ruddlan Castle, brought him to the English Monarch, together with the Regalia, amongst which was the Croes Naid and the Crown of King Arthur." "And so," observes the English chronicler on the subject, "the glory of the Welsh, though against their will, was transferred to the English."* Edward conveyed these in great solemnity to Westminster Abbey, attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans, dressed in their sacred

* The following extract from the Welsh Rolls II., Edward I., m. 1. refers to this affair: "Pro Anyano filio ynor et aliis qui detulerunt ad regem partem illam pretiosisimi ligni Crucis quæ a Wallensibus vocatur Croys seneyht (Croes i Naid) habeant hanc libertatem quod non teneantur in aliquo exercitu regis sequi extra quatuor cantreda."

robes, and a vast number of people. He there placed them on the High Altar, probably as offerings, as his son Alphonso had before done with the ring of Llewelyn and other jewels These latter were taken to adorn the tomb of Edward the Confessor; but what became of the others is not known."*

Once more a relic of the true Cross has been brought into Wales,† in place of that so lovingly treasured and so bitterly lamented by the faithful countrymen and sons of St. Helen. The people of every land honour her for the gift she bestowed upon Christendom. The Universal Church gives her the title of saint as well as "most pious and most venerable empress." And yet, in her own land, among the descendants of her own family and tribe, her name is scarcely known, and her great work, if thought of at all, scoffed at. May the attraction of the cross yet make itself felt, even by the most stubborn and the most sceptical.

Some persons have advanced the theory that St. Helen was a native of Bithynia, apparently for the reason that Drepanum, a town in that country, was named by Constantine, Helenopolis, and was also exempted from taxation, but this was done in honour of a saint and martyr whose memory both the Emperor and his mother held in veneration, St. Lucian. Constantine probably knew him personally, for he was in Nicomedia in 303, and it is said that he was examined by Dioclesian himself; at all events, he made a glorious confession of the Faith, and was cruelly martyred after a long imprisonment. He was buried at Drepanum.

As to the country of St. Helen, the British origin of herself and her son is constantly alluded to by old writers, British and Roman; for instance, on the marriage of Constantine and Fausta, the panegyrist said: "He (Constantius Chlorus) had freed the provinces of

* Arch. Camb.

† It is now placed in the newly-erected Church of the Holy Rood at Tenby.

Britain from slavery; you ennobled them by your origin." The British form of the name is Elen, and it is still a favourite one among her country-women. All her youth was spent in her native land; after she became Empress, she resided chiefly at Rome, at Constantinople, or at Trèves, where the Emperors had a palace. Wherever she dwelt, her presence was marked by the springing up of churches around her, as at Trèves, Bonn, and other places in Germany, and the memory of the holy Empress is greatly venerated in these towns even now, fifteen hundred years after her death.

Her son had several statues sculptured in memory of her; one of these, in which she is standing by a large cross, he placed in the centre of a great square in Constantinople; this statue, it is needless to say, no longer exists. But as long as the Church lasts—that is, to the end of the world, St. Helen's name will be dear to Catholics of every country under the sun, and they will be grateful to her for the work she accomplished on the 3rd of May, 326, when she found the Cross of Christendom.

[The authorities consulted in preparing this pamphlet :—Alban Butler, Cambria Sacra, Archeologia Cambrensis, Bede, and the Welsh Triads.]

A GUILTLESS THIEF.

By Mrs. Raymond Barker.

"There's nothing else to be done, Lambert! You can't draw back. You would only make a fool of yourself, injure the cause, and make us a laughing-stock into the bargain; and we are not going to stand *that*, I can tell you!"

Simon Lebrun, the speaker, was a small, foxy-looking man, with red hair and beard, restless eyes, a cruel-looking mouth, and a general air of combined cunning and self-conceit. Victor Lambert, the man he addressed, was the younger of the two. He made no reply; but with his elbows on the table, and shading his eyes with his thin but sinewy hands, sat still, in an attitude of the deepest dejection.

"Don't you see," resumed Simon, "that you must be consistent? You are at the head of the freethinkers of the place; and what would people say if you, one of the chief advocates of lay funerals, were to turn tail, and play the pious prayer-monger behind a shaveling in a cassock?"

"Yes, it's fine to be a freethinker, and not allowed to think for myself," mutttered Victor; "very fine indeed! so 'consistent,' you know!"

"I tell you," bellowed the other, but not otherwise noticing the interruption, "it cannot and it shall not be! No, no! we'll have a civil interment, and we'll have it on a superb scale. All we freethinkers, with the clubs of the friday-feasters and priest-pelters, will be there, each with a wreath of everlastings, to—"

"Everlastings!" Victor exclaimed, with a look of scorn. "What right have your pack of idiots to bring everlastings? I suppose *that's* 'consistent,' too? They don't believe in the soul: they don't believe in a life to come: they and their stupid wreaths are nothing but a farce, a pretence, and a humbug altogether!"

"Calm yourself, my dear fellow! the everlastings mean nothing more than the expression of a touching sentiment: this our tenets do not disallow, since—"

"Sentiment! tenets!" said Victor; "—sounding brass and tinkling cymbals! No; they only disallow all that can give a man real strength, real comfort: they don't disallow a dreary, hollow, miserable sham!"

"What next, I wonder! I thought you had long since slipped off your leading strings; and here you are as much the slave of early prejudice as ever! Well, if you care at all for your position, you must listen to sense and reason; that is to say, to *me*. And, mind you, an act of bigotry on your part will not be forgiven! Why, with your absurd piety and your sentimental notions about your dead, you might be a Christian Brother instead of the head of the rationalists of this important intellectual centre. To-morrow, if you flinch, we shall all turn our backs upon you, and you will soon find out whether it is safe to go against the will of the sovereign people!

"So, it is settled," he added, as he received no reply, "and to-morrow, at eleven o'clock precisely, we shall

all be ready. I will send round at once, and let them all know. Good night!"

Victor did not move until his visitor had left. Then he rose, and softly opened a door which led into an inner room. The shutters of this were closed, and it was feebly lighted by two wax tapers. Between these tapers, on her little white bed, lay his only daughter, a fair child of about five years of age, who had been carried off almost suddenly by some apparently slight malady. It was this innocent child who was intended to serve as the pretext for an anti-Christian parade on the morrow, and be made the subject of atheistic declamation, of which many a thoughtful heathen of old times would have been ashamed. She lay in a long white garment, as if asleep, with the pretty hair combed off the alabaster forehead and falling on each shoulder. Some little friend (for the child was motherless), had twined a rosary round the tiny wrists, and placed a crucifix within the little hands, which were lightly crossed upon her chest. The same little friend had placed a large bunch of wild hyacinth at her feet, and by it lay a slip of paper on which was written by an unskilful hand: *To dear Solange.*

His little Solange was the only being for whom Victor Lambert had still any affection; his dear young wife having died before the child was two years old. The wife was a good Catholic; and it was only since her death that Victor's godless companions had been able to draw him away entirely from the practice of his religion. Yielding to the jeers of some, and the flattery of others, and, in his foolish vanity wishing to be thought a man of progress, it was not long before he professed himself an atheist and a know-nothing. Thus, a man of progress he undoubtedly was—towards the bottomless abyss: when God in mercy brought him to a halt by this unexpected stroke.

After carefully shutting the door, he knelt down by

the bed, and put his arm tenderly over the little lifeless form. It was long since he had knelt. The very act of kneeling brought to his mind the prayers of other days; and, as if in spite of himself, he said softly, as he kissed and fondled the small waxen fingers: "Our Father Who art in heaven: hallowed be Thy Name: Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done! ——"

He buried his face in the bed-clothes, and sobbed as if his heart would break. Until that moment he had not shed a tear, but now he wept as if he could not cease from weeping. And, strange to say, he felt happier,—he felt nearer to his dead wife, nearer to his little Solange, than he had felt for many a long day. Slowly and earnestly he went on with the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed, the Confiteor,—each one bringing with it the remembrance of the rest.

Then, with a pang, he thought of the morrow, when his heartless comrades would carry off the dear remains of this baptized innocent, whose soul was with God, to bury her like a dog, make blasphemous speeches over her grave, and finish their revolting demonstration by a feast as revolting.

"No, I will not endure it," he exclaimed, as he crossed himself and rose from his knees. "Never shall they have my Solange to insult by their heathen fooleries. They may fume themselves into a black fever, for all I care."

The dusk of evening had come on. He turned the key in the door, and stepped across the street to an old neighbour who had always shown kindness to his motherless child.

"Good Mother Plessy," he said, "will you do a last act of charity to my little one? Will you put her in her coffin, ready for—removal? I am going out to see to a few things, but will not be long away. I want no one but you to go in."

"Yes, indeed, my poor Mr. Victor: I'll see to the

dear lamb: make yourself quite easy about it; and I'll not let a soul in but myself."

Victor was away for an hour, but in that hour he had settled much business, paid all he owed, and taken the rest of his money out of the bank.

When he returned, the little coffin lay closed upon the bed, and the fading bunch of hyacinths upon it. He threw a cloak over it, and took it in his arms into a fly that was waiting at the door.

"Good-bye, dear Mother Plessy," he said, pressing a present into her hand; "I am going to take the little one to my own village, to bury her among my own people, like a Catholic child as she is. It's no theft, to steal my own child; but say nothing till my going is found out!"

"Trust me for that, Mr. Victor! You are only doing what you ought to do. It would be a burning shame to let all those asses play their stupid pranks over a baptized babe, and all to make out that she's no better than a poor dead kitten, instead of a child of God and an heir of glory! One of those same beauties is my nephew Aristide (more's the pity!), that's how I come to know what they're after. They are all going to lose a day's work for this precious demonstration, and I'm right glad that they'll be cheated."

Victor drove off to the railway station. He had obtained the necessary permit for the body, and, without any difficulty intervening, took the night train for his native village in Picardy.

The dawn was greyly breaking through the mists overhanging the peat-bogs and wreathing the willows and poplars on the flats between Pecquigny and Amiens, as he passed along, and, before the train stopped at Noyelles junction, the May sun was sending its first bright rays level across the long wooden bridge, the dewy fields, and the inlets of the sea. From Noyelles, he and his dead child were the only passengers, and. at

that early hour, one man alone, the station-master, a sunburnt old soldier in a blouse, was at the little station of St. Valery-sur-Somme—almost the end of Victor's journey.

The station-master, on learning the state of the case, goodnaturedly opened the door of a small room, and helped to place the coffin upon two chairs. This done, Victor set out on his solitary walk to the long and narrow town about a mile distant, thinking sadly, as he went, how he should manage. Well as he remembered every turn of the road, every tree almost, he was become as a stranger in his native place. He had passed La Ferté, the shipping along by the quay, the Seamen's Chapel, and the reach of road leading to the cemetery: and had entered the ancient gateway called the *Porte de Nevers* before he had made up his mind what to do. At that moment, the Angelus began to ring from the tower of the old parish church, just within the walls. How well he remembered the sound of that bell! It made him feel at home to hear it. Alas! how long it was since he had said the Angelus.

While he still stood listening, and was come to the words, "Pray for us, Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ," the bell ceased, and a young man came out of the door of the tower. Victor went up to him and politely asked at what hour he could see Monsieur le Curé.

The man looked closely at the stranger: his face brightened up, and he held out both hands, "Surely! are you not my old school-fellow, Victor Lambert?"

"I am! And you? Why, you must be the little Mercier of those days: but what a fine strong fellow you have grown!"

"I wish I could say the same of you:—you look pulled down a bit. Come in: this is my house just opposite. I'm sacristan, so it's handy to be close to the church."

And, as he spoke, he took Victor's arm and drew him indoors.

"Wife!" he called out: "here's an old friend: get him some hot coffee and a bit to eat."

"You are too kind: I have not the heart to eat at present: you will understand why, when I explain."

He then told his story. Élise Mercier, with her two small boys, had come down, and the worthy couple listened with much sympathy.

"Well," said Mercier, when he had done, "leave it all to me. I'll arrange everything with Monsieur le Curé. Meantime we will have your dear little girl brought here. You go upstairs and rest. I'll soon be back again."

Victor was touched to the heart by this kindness. "Ah," he thought, "when it comes to the pinch, one good Catholic is worth a whole platform of mouthing infidels and atheists."

"Yes," said Élise, echoing her husband's words, "you rest a bit. We will arrange everything as it should be. I will get together all the little girls in the place, and the ceremony may take place this afternoon. It is not yet seven o'clock: we have some hours before us, you see: plenty of time for everything!"

She showed him into a pretty, neat bedroom, the window of which opened into the garden; placed the hot coffee, a loaf, and butter, on the table; a little book of prayers upon the chimney-piece, and as she left the room, with her youngest boy clutching one corner of her apron, she said, "Now, please feel that you are at home, have some breakfast, and rest well."

Wearied with his night's journey, and his various emotions, Victor after a time fell asleep. For how long, he did not know, but he was at last awakened by the tolling of the bell, in the old tower, almost over his head. He rose and dressed. Mercier came to say that all was

ready, and that the Curé and all the village approved of what he had done.

The two went down together. The coffin of Solange was placed in one of the little rooms, surrounded with lights and covered with flowers. At its head was a tall cross, made of white may-blossoms. A crowd of little girls in white quietly waited in the room; and outside, when the priest came to precede the little coffin to the church, four of the children carried it, while another bore aloft the may-blossom cross.

All the village followed; and Victor, after many years of absence and forgetfulness, thus entered once more into the old church, so familiar to his boyhood. As the ceremony proceeded, his whole life seemed to pass before him. The fragrance of the may, especially, recalled to him the day of his First Communion, when the hedges had been full of it, and he and his sister Charlotte had gathered each an armful to help to decorate the sanctuary on that, the greatest day of his life.

He looked now once more upon that Altar, and thought how the Divine Dweller in that Tabernacle had patiently waited for him, the wanderer and prodigal, to return. With many tears he murmured his long-forgotten prayer. "Heart of Jesus, most compassionate, have mercy upon me! have mercy upon me, a sinner!"

That same evening, the good Curé went to see Victor at the sacristan's. After they had conversed some time all together, sitting in the warm and fragrant twilight in the garden, the Curé asked Victor if he thought of returning to the town he had left.

"Never, Monsieur le Curé! I am a native of this parish I shall be sure to find employment in it, and I don't mean to quit it any more."

"*Benedicamus Domino*!" said the old priest: and (purely from habit) the sacristan answered, "*Deo gratias!*"

Victor was Mercier's guest that night. The partition

between his room and the next was but thin. He thus, heard, in spite of himself, more than he was intended to hear of a conversation which, if not altogether agreeable to the self-esteem of the involuntary listener, nevertheless acted as a tonic, and so was useful in its way.

"A queer thing!" quoth Élise; "as queer a thing as ever I heard, for a man to run away with his own dead child, and all because he couldn't face such a crew as that! I wonder, now, if *I'd* have done it? No: I'd have given them a bit of my mind, and told them just to mind their own business, and let mine alone! And he a *man* too!"

"Well, yes," chimed in her spouse. "It *is* a bit comical, if you come to think of it. I'd have thrashed 'em all round, before I'd have done it: but you see, if a fellow gets to be a weak-kneed Catholic, he gets weak-kneed in other ways too. The poor chap had lost the fear of God, because he took up with the fear of men, and couldn't stand jeering and that: so, seeing he daredn't face the fools, the next best thing was to give 'em the slip. Anyway, I'm glad he's come back here: our Curé will soon buckle him up a bit."

"Maybe so: it's time he grew some gristle, and took pattern by such as *you*, my man!" said the wife, proudly.

Mercier laughed. "Ah! wouldn't you keep me in order if I got slack! As to this poor lad—for he's not much more—let us hope that—

> He who *won't* fight, but runs away,
> May strike good blows some other day!"

This new and improvised version kept Victor awake, thinking, a good half-hour after he would probably have been asleep.

* * * * * * * * * *

But what was going on at the deserted house, on the day of that peaceful solemnity at St. Valéry?

About nine o'clock on the morning after Victor had left, some men presented themselves at his door, sent by Simon Lebrun with a message; but also with a view to keep up his spirits for the great event. After knocking, first with knuckles, then with sticks, and vainly trying to peer in through the chinks of the closed shutters, they turned, in despair, to the meek-looking old woman who sat placidly peeling her vegetables within her open door, just opposite.

"Could you tell us, my good woman," said the youngest and most civil among them, "where Mr. Lambert is? We wish to speak with him."

"Well, Sir, I can only tell you that he went out some time ago, and he said he'd several places to go to; so there's no saying when he may be back. But I'll make bold to say that he won't want to be bothered before the funeral, he takes on so about his little girl. It would be different, now, if there was one Christian among the lot of you; but, as there isn't, why, when a man's in sorrow, you're just no good at all—you can just clap sawdust on a raw cut,—that's all you can do!"

Sly dame Plessy had begun so mildly, that the man was off his guard.

"By my faith, mistress!"

"Your *faith?* What's that? Why, you all trumpet abroad that you haven't got any! Better say my folly; then you'd be right enough!"

"By —, Madam! . . . ."

"Listen to the man! what is God to you who say there is no God? What are you talking about?"

The man's rage was rising. "The dev—" he muttered between his teeth.

"Won't do, neither, master! You can't have such a thing, you know, without a God to make him.

Georgine! Georgine Badois, I say!" she cried, across the street to an old woman who was passing with a hamper of fish on her head, "come and see a poor creature who has lost his faith, and can't find anything to swear by when he's out of temper!"

"That's unlucky," chuckled old Georgine, "specially when he's got somebody he'd like so to swear *at!*" and the fish-dame's cackle of amusement could be heard all down the street.

The men looked savage. After deliberating a moment what was to be done, one of them cried out, "As we cannot stay here all day, Madame, to enjoy your pleasant conversation, we will ask you to give our message to Lambert when he returns. I suppose you will know it when he does so?"

"Certainly," said dame Plessy, who was now surrounded by a group of neighbours keenly interested in the scene. "I know the squeak of his door-hinge, and shall be sure to know when he comes back."

"Tell him, then, that the funeral cannot take place until two o'clock. As some of the clubs are coming from a distance, citizen Lebrun agreed to wait till two."

"Citizen Lebrun, the heathen! Oho! my gentlemen without souls, and so you are bringing your clubs to bury the poor darling like a puppy dog, are you? No, Sir, carry your own message!"

"We can put a paper under the door, and not mind the old witch," said the first.

"The gentlemen without souls believe in witches!" remarked Mère Plessy. "Superstition!"

"Superstition!" laughed the by-standers, as the men, after pushing a paper under Lambert's door, went off, not very happy.

No sooner were they gone than Mère Plessy sallied out to the market-place, close by the little street in which she lived. It was market-day. The great square

in front of the old church was filled with stalls, laden chiefly with vegetables and early fruits; others, with dried or fresh provisions, fish, meat, poultry, and cream cheeses of varying age, hue, and—odour, notably the famous yellow-greenish cheeses of Montfort l'Amaury:—on others were trinkets, gay handkerchiefs for the head or shoulders, woollen garments, hose, and stiff new blouses for the men. Among all, was a multitudinous movement of high white caps, accompanied by an overpowering activity of tongues, as the shrill voices of vendors and bargainers mingled with the screaming of geese, the squeaking of pigs, held up for admiration by a leg or a tail, the cackling and quacking of ducks and fowls, and the merry chimes that rang every quarter of an hour from the old belfry overhead.

From group to group Mère Plessy knowingly worked her way through the animated crowd, where everyone seemed to know her, said a few eager words, which were received with the liveliest interest; then passed on and repeated the process, until all the market-place knew what she wanted it to know. She then returned home, after looking in on a neighbour or two on the way.

At two o'clock a band of music was heard approaching. The 'demonstrators' had to pass down the whole length of the market-place. The Market-people left their stalls and formed a hedge on each side of the line of march; and certainly the processionists had a very bad time of it. Copious and stinging was the ridicule poured upon them by the shrill-voiced women; and when at times some obstacle brought the march to a stand-still, malice could scarcely have wished a worse fate to its worst foe than that of these luckless champions of 'free-thought.'

At length the procession, closely hemmed in by the crowd, emerged into the Church Street. Dame Plessy stood at her open door, the centre of a group of

gossips. Lambert's door was still shut. Simon Lebrun knocked loudly. He tried to enter. It was locked. Strange! "Perhaps," said Simon, loudly, "their fellow citizen might have felt that the touching ceremony would too utterly overpower him, and had left his daughter's burial entirely in their hands." All the same, his ears were crimson, and he struggled again at the door handle.

"Has anyone a key?" he asked in a low voice, of a man next him.

"Ask that old hag on the door-step opposite if she happens to have a key that would fit."

The "hag" was asked.

"Maybe I have, and maybe I haven't," she answered in an indifferent tone. "I'll take a few keys across if you like, and try the lock."

"If you'll give me the keys, ma'am, I'll save you the trouble."

"What! let my keys out of my own hands? Many thanks, Sir; I'm not quite the chicken you take me for!"

And Mother Plessy, not hurrying herself in the least, gradually collected all her keys, upstairs and down, and carried them through the chafing crowd of processionists to Lambert's door.

After deliberately trying all the wrong ones, she put the right one into the key-hole, and with a condescending exclamation of "At last!" opened the door and entered the house; Simon and a crowd of his followers pressing in at the same time.

Silence and emptiness. No corpse, and no coffin! If only there had been a coffin to make a show with, that would have done just as well, for who need know that it was empty? On the floor lay a faded bunch of wild hyacinths, and the bit of paper written in round hand, "To dear Solange," and that was all.

The crowds outside began to clamour, "Come, citizen

Simon, hurry up! we're waiting to see your grand funeral. Here's the hearse at the door!"

"Citizen Lebrun had better ride in the hearse himself! 'Twould be a pity to hire it for nothing."

"Right," said another, "he'd do just as well as a corpse; a hearse is meant for a body without a soul."

"Simon, or Simon's dog!—either will do!" said the shrill voice of Georgine Badois.

* * * * *

The freethinkers of this town have never recovered from the effects of their folly on that memorable market-day,—the 'demonstration' that never came off, the orations that were never delivered, and the grand dinner which, having been ordered, had to be paid for, and was therefore eaten, but which must have been hard to digest.

THE LACE LEGEND OF BRUGES.*

By Mrs. Raymond Barker.

From the time when St Eligius or Eloi, in the year of grace 606, built the little wooden church where now stands the Cathedral of St. Salvator,† and dedicated it to Blessed Mary ever Virgin, the city of Bruges has always been renowned for its devotion to the Holy Mother of God.

This devotion is shown not only by the devout observance of her festivals, the magnificence of the processions in her honour, the placing of her statue over the chief entrance of public buildings, over the door of the dwelling-house, or at the corner of the street; statues which, in spite of the Anabaptists of former times and the Revolutionists of ninety years ago, are still so numerous. It is not merely in the religious and domestic life of Bruges that the thought of our Mother and Queen was habitually interwoven; it entered, more or less, into the commercial life itself, and the invention of the most famous manufacture of the country was attributed to her maternal interposition by the city,

* Reprinted by permission from the *Catholic World*.

† St. Sauveur (or St. Salvator) became the metropolitan Church after the destruction of the ancient Cathedral of St. Donatian. The present church of Our Lady, dating from 1225, owes its origin to a chapel built by St. Boniface, A.D. 744, on the bank of the Reye, and called *Onze Lieve Vrouwe ter Reyen* ("Our dear Lady of the Reye").

which, centuries ago, acquired the name of *Mariastadt*, or the town of Mary.

Lace, as is generally known, and as its name in Italian, *Merletti di Fiandra*, testifies, was a Flemish invention;* but it is not generally known that it is Our Lady herself to whom the tradition of the country points as having taught the delicate art of lace-making to a maiden of this antique city, amongst whose rudely-paved and tortuous streets so many sweet old legends of her gracious interference linger.

There still exists in the *Breydel Street*, narrow as it is, a still narrower street, or rather alley, anciently the lane of the Garre, and now called *Zeep Straet*, or Soap Street, a remnant of the oldest part of Bruges. Until a few years ago, this grey and gloomy lane opened, at its further extremity, upon one of the canals; but this outlet is now closed up. The only visible trace of the canal is, low down on the right hand, the arch of an ancient bridge. Below this arch, when we lately explored the interesting but by no means inviting locality, the water could not be seen because of the utter darkness in which it lay.

In one of the antique and sombre houses of this alley—houses lofty as well as massive, adorned here and there with niches, in which the Saints are featureless and almost shapeless from the wear of time and the damp of many centuries,—lived an aged couple, who, like Quasimodo in his Cathedral, seemed part and parcel of their ancient dwelling. The fashion of their garments —we had almost said, their garments themselves—had undergone no change since the day, when, as a youthful pair, they had taken up their abode in the lane of the Garre (to which they were to give their name), as

* The invention of *guipure* is said to have arisen from the circumstance of a Venetian sailor bringing home to his betrothed a branch of coral. She tried to imitate its curious ramifications with her needle, and produced this variety of the fabric.

vendors of cake,* called *Oele-kucken*, the said delicacies being improved by a sprinkling of currants for purchasers able to lay out an extra farthing for the added luxury.

Beneath a vast chimney-place, the back of which was adorned with a plate of wrought iron, representing the martyrdom of St. Lawrence, hung a huge black pot, which, for sixty years, had been kept full of boiling lamp-oil. Constantly replenished and never emptied, this unctuous bath, like the famous German vintages which are supplied in proportion to the demand, always retained a portion of its original stock.

Conné and his wife,—from whom, thanks to the public appreciation of their oil-cakes, the lane of the Garre soon took the name of the Garre von Conné,—seated before their magic cauldron, threw into it balls of paste, which, after a few turns in the oil, were fished out with a two-pronged fork; round, golden, and appetizing. A group of expectant street boys, whose tendency to haunt the precincts of a bun-shop is a fact universally acknowledged, awaited the happy moment when they might scald their fingers and tongues in consuming them.

The furniture of the abode was in keeping with the toilette of its ancient owners. It consisted of a carved chest, blackened with oily vapours; an iron lamp, which emitted a dubious light, but made up for this deficiency by liberality in smoke and odour; a pair of wooden candlesticks, a few heavy chairs, a table, soaked rather than spotted with grease, and a few earthenware jars more or less mutilated. It was said, however, that the old couple owned, deeper in the house—which, like almost all Belgian houses, went very far back—some, comfortable and well-furnished rooms, and retired to these after the ringing of the curfew. No neighbour, however, had penetrated thus far, and it remained little more than a conjecture of those who sometimes saw a

* A kind of bun fried in oil, and still extremely popular, especially on fasting days.

light through the chinks of the shuttered windows after dark.

In this mysterious alley, which, as its name of '*Garre*' indicates, was a landing-place, lived the heroine of the legend.

At the period to which it belongs, the town was still surrounded by dense forests, and was circumscribed within the limits of what are now the interior canals.

Then,—it is now long centuries ago,—a poor woman, named Barbara, lived with her five children in the Garre von Conné. She was the widow of a brave sailor who had been lost at sea, leaving nothing to his family but the somewhat sombre dwelling which sheltered them. Barbara was not old, but grief and poverty had bent her frame, enfeebled her sight, and so undermined her strength that a few turns of her spinning-wheel caused her fatigue.

All the care of the house and household, therefore, fell upon Serena, the eldest girl. Tall, too thin and grave for her years, with a dark circle round her large eyes, melancholy from premature anxiety and want, Serena only needed a little sunshine and fresh air, a freedom from care, some little interval of happiness, to make her a beautiful girl; but the poor child, who had only the earnings of her spinning-wheel to provide for all the wants of the family, was sinking beneath the task, while she fulfilled it with the devotedness which springs from an ardent faith and a firm adherence to duty.

Her home being at the end of the Garre, opened into a small garden, with a gate upon the quay. Several steps led down into this garden from the low and arched stone doorway, around which thick ivy clustered, the shelter of countless birds.

The room in which the family mostly lived, and which overlooked the garden and the canal, was lighted by a casement filled with stained glass,—a present to the sailor from a craftsman to whom he had rendered some

service. In winter, when the wind shook the leaded panes, it seemed as if the antique dames and knights and long-winged angels fluttered and danced in the framework; but in summer, the gladsome sunbeams pursued the forms of angels, knights, and birds, and dragons into the room, throwing them athwart the polished oak table, the clean sanded floor, or the fair hair of the children; and shedding rainbow hues on the tiles of the chimney, and the row of wooden trenchers on the shelf.

The winter had been long, and a hard one for the poor, in spite of the charitable aid so freely given at the convent gates. At the return of spring, the poverty in the widow's house was extreme. Serena compelled herself to conceal from her mother her own sadness and weariness; but daily, when the bell of the chapel of St. Basil * rang the morning Angelus, the early dawn found her there, kneeling before the Mother of Sorrows.

There, one day, her trembling lips pronounced the following vow:

"Holy Virgin, if you will show me a way to provide for my mother and sisters, I promise to stifle the joy and hope of my heart; and, moreover, to none will I tell my vow, lest I be too sorely pressed to break it!"

This joy and this hope must have been very precious, for, after her sacrifice, Serena wept long and bitterly at our Lady's feet.

On the opposite quay, facing Barbara's house, lived a wood-merchant, Master Van Oost, on whose landing-place, barges, laden with timber, often unloaded their cargoes. Serena's father had many a time moored the little vessel of which he was captain, on his own side of the canal, and being always ready to lend a helping hand to his neighbour, friendly relations sprang up between the two families, which stood the test of misfortune. The merchant would willingly have assist-

* Founded by Thierry of Alsace and Sibylle of Anjou. Consecrated in 1150.

ed dame Barbara, had she not thrown over her poverty a certain austere dignity and reserve which made those to whom this poverty was no secret afraid to offer their aid. They feared to wound her somewhat proud nature, besides exposing themselves to an almost certain refusal.

It was between the children of the two families that the closest intimacy had been established. Their connecting link was the rowing boat, moored by the water-stairs of Master Van Oost, whose eldest son, Arnold, during an hour of leisure, would daily cross in it to the opposite quay, when the whole troop of young ones would jump in and row with him along the broad canals of what became, later on, "the Venice of the north."

Years passed. Arnold, who was a wood-carver's apprentice, industrious and intelligent, advanced to manhood. Serena, patient, grave, and toiling, though younger than he, seemed older than her years.

The moment when the friendship of childhood and youth becomes transformed into a deeper and tenderer feeling can no more be pointed out than the exact spot can be shown where the streamlet becomes a river, or the river an arm of the sea. The current grows strong and rapid, but its irresistible force is only realised when it encounters an obstacle.

Serena no longer allowed herself to be enticed into the boat, and avoided being left alone with Arnold; but from his window he would watch her, whenever, after the family meal, she came out to throw to the swans the crumbs remaining from the poor repast. In the evenings, too, when Master Van Oost went off to his favourite hostelry in Wool Street, near the Stone-House, (which even at that time was in existence), his son would cross over to dame Barbara's, where, after throwing on the smouldering hearth a goodly faggot of waste wood, with which he came provided, he would carve at an oaken panel or bracket, relating meanwhile some history

or legend he had learnt at the monastery school of the Benedictines, while Serena and her mother spun. At the ringing of the curfew, the widow rose to retire, and Arnold took his departure until the morrow.

He had always been in the habit of accompanying dame Barbara and her children in their walk between Mass and Vespers on Sundays, when they went outside the fortifications to the vast woods around the castles of Maele or of St. Michael. While Barbara rested and the children played, Arnold would help Serena to gather flowers, which they made into two large bunches: one for the altar of our Lady in the chapel of St. Basil, and the other to place before her statue in Serena's room: and it must be confessed that, if Arnold had had his own way, the chapel of St. Basil would not always have had the best.

During one of these walks, the young couple agreed that, when Arnold should be old enough and skilful enough to be elected a Master in the Gild of Sculptors, they would ask the consent of their parents for their marriage.

Arnold had first shown a taste for carving, when but a child, picking up bits of wood in his father's sheds, and shaping them with a clumsy knife. Since his apprenticeship began, his progress had been so great, that he had reason to hope that the Gild would receive him before the age at which it was the general rule to admit members.

It was while Arnold was absorbed in the piece of carving he was to submit to the judgment of the master-sculptors, happy in his work, and in the fair dream it was to enable him to realise, that the distressing poverty in Serena's home impelled her to make the vow "to stifle the joy of her heart," if our Blessed Lady would show her a way to maintain her family.

When she returned from the church of St. Basil, her mother perceived her extreme paleness, and asked if she were ill. Serena answered that she had not slept well: but said no more.

On the morrow, which was Sunday, Arnold joined the family as usual in their country walk. It was a beautiful day, late in the month of May. The delicate gossamers, called by the people the *fil de la Vierge*, or threads detached from our Lady's distaff, floated in the air, giving sure sign of fine and settled weather. Serena, silent and pensive, was sitting on the grass, in a flowery meadow near Engelendael, or 'the Vale of the Angels,' while Arnold, standing near, was tying up with rushes the flowers he had gathered, at the same time pondering as to what might be the cause of her sadness.

All at once, the air above them was slightly obscured by a soft shadow falling over Serena, and in another moment her black apron was covered with an innumerable quantity of gossamer threads. She observed with amazement that their interlacing gradually formed the most delicate and graceful figures imaginable,—flowers, birds, and arabesques. With wondering attention she studied the marvellous arrangement of these threads, while she felt within herself—"This is our Blessed Lady's answer to me! If, at her command, a poor little field spider can make this beautiful design, with a thread too fine to be felt, why should not I do the same with the thread of my distaff?"

But how was the ethereal fabric to be taken home? Arnold solved the problem by making a light frame work of twigs; the apron, with its treasure, was laid upon it, and thus, with the utmost care and caution, safely conveyed to the house in the Garre von Conné.

That evening Serena prayed long and fervently. All night long the miraculous web was interwoven with her dreams. Awaking at day-break, she hastened to the chapel of St. Basil, and knelt before the statue of our Blessed Lady.

"Holy Virgin!" she said, while the tears coursed down her cheeks; "You have accepted my vow. Help me to be as thankful as I ought. Help me to stifle my heart; and, Blessed Mother, comfort Arnold!"

Still she knelt, until, calmed and strengthened, she returned to her lowly home. On entering the house she kissed and embraced her mother with more than her usual warmth.

"Give me your blessing, mother," she said, "for I am undertaking a difficult work."

"And what may that be, my child?" asked the widow, struck by the almost spiritual look of her daughter's pale and earnest face. "Methinks you are strangely solemn to-day."

"I would fain copy the pattern which yestereven fell upon my lap as if from heaven."

"Nay, child!" said Barbara: "that were surely folly. While you were wasting precious time in essaying a work not to be wrought by mortal fingers, your spinning would be nought. Irma is slow, and Teresa unskilful, save in entangling the thread, and you know full well that not fewer than ten skeins a week must be spun if we are all to live."

"Mother, I ask but one week. I will take my little gold cross to Matheas. He will give enough for it to keep us for those few days. And, never fear! Our dear Lady has not deceived me: I *know* I shall succeed!"

Dame Barbara made no further opposition. She even began to share her daughter's hope, if not her conviction.

"Do as you list, my child," she said, "and may the Blessed Virgin aid you!"

Serena set to work. Taking her finest thread, which she herself had spun, bleached, and twisted, she cut the ends, and made patient and repeated endeavours to imitate the model before her. But her threads at every moment mingled and got entangled, obliging her to take fresh ones, or undo what she had done.

Arnold came in, and after watching her a few moments, perceived her difficulty. He then cut short lengths of wood, and fastened one to each of the ends of thread,

thus hindering them from ravelling. The *bobbin* was invented. This was no small advance for the first day.

On the morrow, after the first Mass at St. Basil's (which, from Easter to All Saints' was always at four o'clock), Serena resumed her work with fresh courage. A firm cushion had been given her by a nun of a neighbouring convent, and on this she fixed her work. The *pillow* was invented. The cushion suggested pins. Some pins, indeed, were remaining upon this one, and Serena made use of them to keep her threads in place. In short, she worked so continuously, and to such good purpose, that, not fifteen days later, on the Saturday evening, she placed round the neck of our Lady's statue, in the church of St. Basil, a fabric of which the design, at least in its main lines, resembled that of her pattern.

It was not like the evenly-made Valenciennes of our days, nor the fine *appliqué* of Brussels, nor the delicate point of Mechlin, but it contained the germ of each, and was the starting-point of all. It was something unknown, strange and charming—the infancy of lace. Fresh attempts succeeded better and better, and to make variety, Arnold designed the patterns, which Serena copied in finer and ever finer thread.

The fame of the wonderful invention quickly spread abroad. All the noble ladies of the place, as well as the châtelaines of Maele, Wynandael, Tilleghem, and others around Bruges, came to see Serena at work, and gave orders for coifs and lappets, collars and wristlets of the marvellous tissue. They paid largely, and competence and comfort were no longer strangers in the widow's home.

Arnold, for his part, did not remain inactive. The carved work which was to win him an entrance into the Gild, was almost finished: in fact, it was so, but the young sculptor, never fully satisfied with the result of his endeavours, daily added a few more touches, to bring his work nearer to the perfection to which he aspired.

That which is greatest and noblest in the human heart can never fully express itself. The true artist always remains below his ideal. He awaits an inspiration as a plant awaits a ray of sunshine to expand its buds into blossoms.

The sunbeam Arnold waited for, was the encouragement of a smile from Serena. One day, when he was quitting the house, she turned her calm, pure eyes upon him, and smiled as she bade him "Farewell!" At once, everything around him and within him seemed to brighten. Leaping into the boat, he returned gaily home, and went to bestow a last scrutiny upon his masterpiece. It was a massive oaken *awmbry* or cupboard, with arched panels, richly carved, and all its ground-work representing the leafage of an oak, amid whose branches birds and squirrels were disporting themselves. It now reflected his own contentment: he was satisfied at last. Without more delay, he went to the Dean of the Sculptors' Gild, and announced that his work was ready to be submitted to the judgment of the jury.

* * * * *

A week later, Arnold, dressed in his best doublet and finest linen, as if going to a wedding feast, eagerly unmoored the boat, and rowed across the canal. Three bounds brought him to the widow's house. Entering the room where dame Barbara was sitting, he knelt before her, and said, as he seized both her hands: "Mother, I am elected a master-sculptor! Will you have me for your son?" "With all my heart: and may God bless you, my dear boy!" exclaimed the poor woman, as she bent to embrace him, and then looked up joyfully at Serena, who, in the deep window recess, was busied with her lace.

She stood up, and the evening sunshine cast the hues of the pictured panes upon a face white and cold as

marble. She tried to speak, but no sound escaped her ashy lips; and, had not Arnold sprung forward and caught her in his arms, she would have fallen. Laying her gently on a couch, he reproached himself bitterly, in the belief that his too sudden request was the sole cause of the shock—a belief which was shared also by her mother.

"Speak, dearest love!" he said, as he knelt by her, as she lay white and apparently unconscious, while her mother bathed her brow. "Why should my words seem sudden, when you know how I love you, how I have always loved you, my own Serena?"

She seemed to hear, for she uttered a faint moan.

"Think, dearest," he continued, "how happy we shall be together!"

"Never!" she whispered, with her eyes still closed. "Arnold, have pity! If you love me, leave me!"

* * * * *

That winter was the longest, and, in spite of the increase of external comforts, the dreariest, that Serena had ever known. Her strength was failing, and her only solace seemed to be in going alone to St. Basil's, or to the Cathedral of St. Donatian, which was almost as near to her home. But, besides teaching her beautiful art to her sisters, she worked at it assiduously herself; and having now means to succour the indigent, many a poor family around had cause to bless the pale-faced girl who spoke so little but who did so much.

Arnold, beyond measure distressed and perplexed, knew not to what cause to attribute Serena's refusal, especially as he saw that her own suffering was sapping her very life. Even Master Van Oost, seeing his son's despair, humbled himself to go and remonstrate with the maiden, and even to entreat her not to reject a love so deep and true, or else at least to give a reason for disappointing an affection she had never forbidden.

Finding her impenetrable, although most sorrowful

and gentle withal, Van Oost rose angrily, saying that he was a fool for demeaning himself to ask any girl to accept his son, who was as fine a young fellow as you would find between the Maes and the Yser: in fact, there were plenty of rich burgesses who would give their ears to have him for a son-in-law; and as to their daughters, why their heads were turned if he did but doff his cap to them after Mass on Sundays!—"But," he added, "I and my son will trouble you no longer. I shall counsel him to pay his court to a certain worthy damsel whose father has had a word with me on the matter; and, by our Lady! the damsel, for her part, will not be one to turn a deaf ear or a cold shoulder to so gallant a youth!"

So saying, Van Oost drew up his portly person to its full height, and stalked out of the room. Turning, as he left the door, to give a parting scowl, he saw Serena standing, her hands clasped on her breast, and her thin face contracted with such an expression of misery and woe, that, angry as he was, his kindly heart was touched. More perplexed than ever, he pondered, as he returned to the boat, whether Serena might have been "overlooked" by the evil eye, and be perchance the victim of some malignant spell. "Moreover," he soliloquized, "her mother declares that she loves the lad, since, though she avoids him by day, she prays for him in her dreams by night. By St. Godelieve, there is some strange mystery in all this," he muttered, crossing himself before he handled the oars. "*Ab insidiis diaboli, libera nos, Domine!*"

Van Oost told all his trouble to his son, and then suggested for his consideration the rich burgher's daughter, of whom he had spoken to Serena, and who was, as he said, a discreet maiden, with a well-lined purse and a comely person.

"Father," said Arnold, "I have never disobeyed you yet: do not force me to do so now. I will wait for Serena a year and a day, and if she will not then accept

me, I will go to the wars. But something in my heart tells me to hope. Father Placidus deems it a sign for good; he bids me have patience, great trust in God, and in our Lady's intercession; and, as you know, men count the holy monk a seer. He would not bid me hope, if hope there were none."

After some demur, Van Oost ended by consenting to say nothing at present to the burgher about his daughter.

Arnold, in spite of his latent hope, was too anxious and unhappy to find it easy to work with the same assiduity as before his grievous disappointment, and spent many a quarter of an hour in watching for a glimpse of Serena, whose profile he could see as she sat at work by the open lattice.

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The long winter had passed away at last, melting before the softness of advancing spring. One Sunday morning, late in May, Serena, after hearing Mass with the rest of her family, had let them return home without her, and remained in the church of St. Basil. It was the anniversary of the miracle at Engelendael. The richly-decorated upper chapel, still thronged with worshippers, seemed too bright for her sad heart. She descended the stone staircase and entered the lower one, which was still almost in darkness, except for the feeble glimmer of some tapers, and where she believed herself alone. Kneeling on the ground before the ancient image of our Lady of the Poor, she stretched out her arms, as in saying the prayers of the Cross, and said aloud: "Most holy Virgin! you accepted my vow—my mother and sisters are in plenty—but you have not helped me to stifle my heart; and you have not made Arnold happy. If he suffers as I suffer, then, sweet Mother, intercede for us that we may die!"

Behind one of the massive pillars supporting the low vaulted roof, knelt Arnold, unseen and unsuspected by Serena. With a thrill of mingled joy and pain he had

at once divined whose slight form was enveloped in the long, black, hooded mantle, which almost concealed the features of the wearer. He watched her kneel with outstretched hands, and heard the tearful prayer which revealed the mysterious secret. It was, then, a vow! Sick at heart, and cold as death, he leant against the pillar, until Serena rose. Then he stood up also, and joined her at the entrance.

In a low, deep voice, in which distress and reproach were mingled with affection, he asked, "Why did you make that vow?"

She started painfully on seeing him, and her pale cheeks flushed. He knew it, then! She herself had unwittingly revealed her secret, and now there was nothing to hinder her from telling him all. She did so: adding, "And this is the day of the miracle, a year ago. Teresa and Irma are going with me to the meadow near Engelendael;—perhaps for the last time before I die."

"And I also will go," said Arnold. "You must not forbid me: you must not refuse the last request I will ever make you! I shall go to the wars or else as a pilgrim to the shrine of the Apostles. I must either fight or wander: I have no heart, without you, to work at home; and I have no vocation for the cloister: neither have you, Serena! O that of our two broken hearts, God would make one whole one!"

Serena did not refuse his last request. After the mid-day meal, Arnold, who told his father what he had that morning learnt, rowed the three girls to the drawbridge of the "Holy Cross" gate where they disembarked and took the road through the woods between Assebrouck and Engelendael. So they came to the well-remembered meadow, fragrant and gay with its many flowers, among which the white butterflies frolicked and flickered like summer snowflakes.

Teresa and Irma ran hither and thither, picking the wild orchis, vetch, and ox-eye daisies, while Arnold re-

mained by Serena, who, glad to rest, sat down on the bank of a little stream. Sad as these two were, still, both were in a certain sense relieved, the one by having unburdened her secret, the other by learning it, although it sealed his fate: but a courageous man prefers to know the worst, whatever that may be.

The weather was calm, and the soft air scarcely waved the pendent sprays of the larches overhead, while, at their feet, the clustering forget-me-nots shone out among the willow-herb and flowering rush, like patches of blue sky compounded into constellations of blossom.

Gossamer threads flashed here and there. And surely, were they not becoming more and more numerous? down through the larches they floated; they floated across the stream, and, as if guided by some invisible will, all floated in one direction. Slowly and gradually the graceful marvel of the previous May was repeated. The gleaming cloud of Our Lady's Threads again came softly down upon Serena's apron, which was now of black silk, bordered with blue. Silently and thickly fell the silvery filaments, until their interlacing formed an exquisite crown of roses.

Breathlessly, Arnold and Serena watched the wondrous formation of the delicate design. "Holy Virgin!" sighed Serena; "Is this the crown of a bride of Christ, or a crown of martyrdom? There is no other crown for me!"

Even as she spoke, it seemed as though an unseen hand were guiding the gleaming threads until the following words were woven plainly within the circle of the crown:—

"KIND VAN MIJ, IK LAT U OF UWE BELOFT."

(My child, I release you from your vow.)

Together, the two uttered a cry of joy. Carefully holding out her apron, so as to preserve the precious design, the pledge and proof of a dispensation direct

from heaven, Serena and her beloved knelt side by side upon the flowery field, to thank the Mother of Mercy for her two-fold act of clemency. The sunshine that bathed the youthful pair was not so bright as their gladness, nor so fervid as their gratitude and love. Like a long pent-up stream now suddenly set free, the torrent of happiness was almost overwhelming. Teresa and Irma, seeing their sister and Arnold kneeling as if in ecstasy, hastened from their wanderings among the flowers, to learn what wonderful event had happened. Great was their jubilation when Arnold, pointing to the fair Rose-crown and its still fairer legend, exclaimed: "See Teresa, Irma, see! Our Lady herself has spoken! I am to be your brother!"

Then, eager to gladden their parents' hearts, they returned homewards without delay.

They found Master Van Oost with Dame Barbara, whose tearful eyes told plainly that their talk had been about her daughter's vow. But, what was the amazement of both, when they saw Serena,—no longer the alabaster maiden who had left the house as if for her own funeral, an hour or two before, but with a glow of health and happiness upon her radiant face—enter the house, leaning on the arm of Arnold, whose frank and handsome countenance showed the joy of his honest heart.

Laying the apron with our Lady's lace-work before the wondering and delighted parents, the young couple knelt to receive their blessing.

When, in three weeks' time, Arnold and Serena were united in marriage by the good Father Placidus, at the church of St. Basil, the bride wore a veil of beautiful lace, as an act of homage to her heavenly Benefactress, over whose statue she hung it as an offering after wearing it on this one important occasion.

The happiness of Serena's married life more than compensated for all the sad and laborious times which had preceded it.

Dame Barbara, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, lived to a good old age.

Serena had initiated many young girls of Bruges in the art of lace-making, and also many religious, who taught it in their schools. To help the children to learn the patterns, they accustomed them to sing *telligen*, or counting songs, while at their work, each verse counting a certain number in the meshes of the lace. Anciently these *telligen* were all of a sacred character, such, for instance, as one of fifteen stanzas on our Lord's Sacred Passion;—so that, from its first beginning until now, a religious idea has been (almost literally) interwoven with its chief characteristic manufacture by the Catholic people of the antique Marienstadt.

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In relating this legend, we would not be understood to imply approval, under ordinary circumstances, of anything so dangerous as an unauthorized vow, which might in many cases be an act of as much presumption as devotion.

The Gordon Riots.[1]

BY LIONEL JOHNSON, B.A.

MOST Catholics know by name the Gordon Riots; those of us who are readers of Dickens know something of their history from the brilliant pages of *Barnaby Rudge;* but I think that few of us recognize in these riots the last great persecution of the Catholic Church in England. They originated in the first great abolition of the penal laws; and from that day to this English Catholics have more and more won back their personal and civic rights, together with the respect and toleration of their fellow-citizens. From time to time, as at the restoration of the Hierarchy in England forty-three years ago, Protestant malice has displayed itself in bursts of noisy rhetoric; but the Gordon Riots are the last instance of a great popular agitation against the Catholic Church, culminating in outrage and desecration. And because this is so, I have tried to put together an account of the Gordon Riots, compiled for the most part from contemporary records.

Catholics can easily admire the splendid virtues of faith and steadfastness displayed by the Blessed Thomas More, Lord Chancellor, by the Blessed John Fisher, Cardinal and Bishop, and by their fellow-sufferers at the Reformation: martyrdom compels our admiration. But we easily forget the quiet courage of our Catholic forefathers up to the present

[1] A Lecture given at St. George's Students' Union, Southwark.

century; they were not persecuted unto death, but they lived daily under the shadow of death; their lives were made a burden and a torment, yet they endured that daily, lifelong infliction of miseries, great and small, which is almost harder to bear than the sudden agony of martyrdom and death. It will be enough if I do but give a rough list of some of the penal laws in force against Catholics, from the times of the Reformation, up to the outbreak of the Gordon Riots.

(1) No Catholic nobleman might sit in the House of Lords. (2) No Catholic gentleman might sit in the House of Commons. (3) No Catholic might vote at elections. (4) A Catholic had to pay double taxes, unless he turned Protestant. (5) No Catholic might hold any public office. (6) No Catholic might present to any living in the Established Church, though Jews were allowed to do so. (7) Catholics who stayed away from Protestant worship were fined £20 a month. (8) No Catholic might keep arms for self-defence, nor bring a lawsuit, nor be a guardian, nor an executor, nor a lawyer, nor a doctor, nor travel five miles from his house: all under heavy penalties. (9) A Catholic woman, married to a Protestant, forfeited two-thirds of her dowry, unless she attended her husband's church, and she was liable to imprisonment at any time, unless ransomed by her husband at £10 a month. (10) Any four magistrates might compel a Catholic convicted of not attending Protestant worship to turn Protestant, on penalty of banishment out of England for life. If he dared to return, he was to be hanged. (11) Any two magistrates might at any time summon any Catholic over sixteen; should he refuse to turn Protestant, and persist for six months in his refusal, he was declared incapable

of possessing land, and his lands were confiscated to the nearest Protestant heir. (12) No such Catholic might buy land, and all contracts made by him were null and void. (13) Any Catholic who employed a Catholic schoolmaster in his family, was fined £10 a month, besides £2 a day on account of the schoolmaster. (14) Any Catholic who sent his child to a Catholic school abroad, was fined £100, and the child was disqualified from inheriting, from buying, and from holding any property whatsoever. (15) Any priest who was convicted of saying Mass was fined £120; any one convicted of hearing Mass was fined £60. (16) Any priest who came from abroad and did not turn Protestant within three days, was liable to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. (17) Any one who became a Catholic, or induced another to become a Catholic, was liable to be hanged, drawn, and quartered.

Under these mild and pleasant laws lived the Catholics of England in the last century; the Catholics of Ireland suffered far worse things, a penalty for her greater fidelity to the Catholic faith. It is true that these barbarous laws were not always enforced; public opinion, common charity, could not stand the infliction of death; but the lesser penalties were constantly inflicted, and every Catholic lived with these swords over his head, in a state of perpetual apprehension. The worst danger came from informers; those of us who have the good fortune, and also the misfortune, to be Irish, know what that implies. In many cases a distant Protestant relative, holding no intercourse with his Catholic kinsmen, was tempted to possess himself of their estates by giving information of some breach of these monstrous laws, and the magistrates were bound, however unwillingly, to act.

It was because some of these laws, by no means the greater number or the most severe, were done away, that the Gordon Riots broke out, and that London was nearly burnt to the ground to the tune of "No Popery" and "Down with the Papists." So much by way of preface.

Upon the 1st of May, 1778, the English Catholics, in view of the proposed Bill for their relief, presented a petition to King George III. "We beg leave," they said, "to assure your Majesty that we hold no opinions repugnant to the duties of good citizens." It was perfectly true, the English Catholics were a small and peaceable body; as Burke said, they were "enough to torment, but not to fear;" and he estimates their numbers, of all ages and conditions, at less than 50,000. A few days after the presentation of the petition two leading members of the House of Commons, Sir George Savile and Mr. Dunning, introduced a Bill for the relief of Catholics. It was a very harmless Bill in the eyes of all intelligent Protestants; priests were no longer to be punished for officiating or for teaching: the estates of Catholics educated abroad were no longer liable to confiscation by the nearest Protestant heir; no Protestant might any more seize upon his Catholic kinsman's estate; Catholics might in future inherit property of all kinds. These were very elementary privileges, and Mr. Dunning called the refusal of them so long, "a disgrace to human nature." Sir George Savile said that he knew of Catholics constantly blackmailed by informers. The Bill was passed, almost unanimously, in both Houses; all the leading politicians spoke in its favour, including Thurlow, afterwards Lord Chancellor, and Henry Dundas, Lord Advocate for

Scotland. The only speaker against the Bill was the Bishop of Peterborough, who professed Liberal principles, but forgot them where Catholics were concerned.

The Bill did not apply to Scotland, since it repealed clauses of a statute passed in William III.'s time, before the legislative union of England and Scotland; but Dundas promised to introduce a Bill repealing some of the penal laws against Scotch Catholics. Everything looked calm, but towards the end of the year an uproar arose in Scotland. The Presbyterian Synod in Glasgow resolved to oppose any Bill that might be introduced for the relief of Catholics: at Edinburgh, and elsewhere, special Protestant associations were formed. Newspapers and sermons were full of Protestant denunciations, Catholics were insulted in the streets, and threatened at home. Dr. Robertson, the distinguished historian was specially abused for his toleration of Catholics. At last the Protestant associations found a worthy leader in the notorious Lord George Gordon. This fanatic was the youngest son of the Duke of Gordon, and born in 1750; he was therefore only twenty-eight years of age; George II. was his godfather. He began his career as a midshipman in the navy at the time of the American Revolution, but he quarrelled with the authorities about his promotion, and left the service. He was elected member for a small Wiltshire town in 1774; at first he was silent, but soon became known for the vehemence of his No Popery harangues. It was a witticism of the day that there were three parties in the State, the Ministry, the Opposition, and Lord George Gordon. Horace Walpole called him "the lunatic apostle;"

and he also speaks of his "loose morals," whilst Hannah More, a very different sort of person, calls him "very debauched." He was very tall, very thin, very sallow, with very high cheekbones and very long, lank, red hair; he wore spectacles, trousers of red tartan plaid, and a black velvet coat. His speeches were simply ravings, for example: "If His Majesty does not keep his coronation oath, we will do more than abridge his revenues, we will cut off his head." It was his firm belief that George III., of all men, was a Catholic. In the House of Commons no notice was taken of him, but he created immense enthusiasm throughout the country, and most of all in Scotland, where next year, in 1779, riots broke out. The houses and property of Catholics were destroyed, and their persons insulted and assaulted. At Edinburgh handbills were distributed crying out against "the Pillar of Popery;" that is to say, a house newly built at Leith, with a room in it used for Mass. It was burned to the ground, the inhabitants escaping with difficulty. The magistrates did nothing.

Jack Wilkes, the celebrated demagogue, infidel, rake, and wit, who throughout the riots behaved admirably, asked Dundas what had become of his Bill for the relief of Scotch Catholics? Dundas replied, that the Scotch Catholics had asked him to drop it, for fear of the Protestant uproar, which it would excite. They forwarded a petition to Parliament praying for redress: Burke presented it: Lord North, the Prime Minister, was fast asleep as usual, while Burke spoke, blaming the Government for its indolence. "Behold," said he, "what I have said again and again; the Government, if not defunct

at least slumbers: brother Lazarus is not dead, only sleepeth." The Protestant associations grew in confidence, and Lord George formed similar associations in England, with branches all over the country. He continued to rant about his tens of thousands of followers and I think it clear that, weak and foolish by nature, the sense of power turned his brain. We have come to the great year of the riots, 1780. Gordon's first step was to procure an interview with George III., whom he believed to be a Catholic, and upon that unlucky monarch he inflicted a long Irish Protestant pamphlet about the errors of Popery. He began to read it at mid-day: he had not finished it by sunset; so Walpole tells the story. It had no effect upon the King; at least, none of a political nature. The Government began to be alarmed at the violence of popular feeling against the Catholics; and, to soothe them, a Bill for the relief of Protestant Dissenters had been passed: a similar policy to the Declaration of Indulgence by James II. It was of no use. Lord George delivered inflammatory speeches every day, and was busily engaged in getting signatures to a monster petition to Parliament against the Catholics. Advertisements were put up all over London, and handbills littered about the streets. The petition, in the course of many weeks, was signed by thousands. At the end of May, Lord George held a meeting of the Protestant Association in the Coachmakers' Hall. The great room was crowded.

Lord George promised to present the petition on June 2nd. It was resolved, that the Association should meet on that day in St. George's Fields, Southwark, wearing blue cockades in their hats, as an outward and visible sign of true Protestants.

Lord George declared that unless 20,000 men at least assembled, he would not present the petition. On Friday, June 2nd, at ten o'clock, they met in St. George's Fields, which were then an entirely open space, including the site of the St. George's Catholic Club, and of the head-quarters of the Catholic Truth Society. The lowest estimate of their numbers gives them as 50,000; the highest, as 100,000. A newspaper of the day, the *London Courant*, remarked that it was "a glorious and most affecting spectacle, to see such numbers of our fellow-citizens advancing in the cause of Protestantism, so meanly and infamously deserted." A few days later, the same newspaper did not think it half so glorious and affecting a spectacle, when these true blue Protestants had nearly burned London to the ground, for the honour and glory of Protestantism. Crowds joined the ranks of the Association for mere fun or mischief's sake. Gordon was received with enthusiasm, and made a silly speech. The mob was divided into three divisions, which crossed the river by three bridges to meet at the Houses of Parliament, a distance, as the Obelisk in the Blackfriars Road informs us, of one mile. The main body crossed over London Bridge, and proceeded through Temple Bar to Westminster, six abreast. The great petition, with 120,000 signatures to it, mostly marks, was carried before them by a porter. The Government had taken no precautions: there were, of course, at that time no police, but only a few old and feeble watchmen. No special constables were sworn in, no troops were in readiness, as they were in 1848, when the great Chartist assembly was held, nearly upon the same spot. The mob advanced to Palace Yard

and took possession of the open space, before the Houses met in the afternoon. The House of Lords met to consider a motion by the Duke of Richmond, for annual Parliaments and universal franchise; a singularly inappropriate time at which to move such measures. Thurlow, now Lord Chancellor, was ill; and Lord Mansfield, the great Judge, took his place.

Lord Mansfield was at this time most unpopular, because he had lately directed a jury to acquit a Catholic priest accused of the monstrous crime of saying Mass. His carriage drew up to the yard, the windows were immediately broken, and the old man and great lawyer was howled at as a "notorious Papist," his robes torn, his wig dishevelled; the Archbishop of York, who had previously succeeded in entering the House, after his lawn sleeves had been torn off and thrown in his face, rushed single-handed into the mob and rescued Lord Mansfield. The Judge took his seat upon the woolsack, "trembling," we are told, "like an aspen." The Bishop of Lincoln, the Lord Chancellor's brother, had his carriage smashed to pieces: half fainting, he fled into a neighbouring house and escaped over the roof in a woman's dress. Lord Bathurst, President of the Council, had his wig pulled off, and was jeered at by the mob as "the Pope," and "an old woman:" the mob thus splitting in two, as Walpole wittily remarked, the Protestant notion of Pope Joan. The Duke of Northumberland had with him in his carriage his secretary, a gentleman in black: the mob raised the cry of "Jesuit." The Duke was dragged out, rolled on the ground, and robbed, on the best Protestant principles, of his watch and purse. Meanwhile, inside the House of Lords,

prayers were read, and business began; when, as the Duke of Richmond was speaking, Lord Montfort burst into the House, and in a breathless voice begged to inform their lordships, that Lord Boston was being killed by the mob. It was suggested that the Lords should sally forth in a body to his rescue, the Lord Chancellor at their head with the mace; but the Chancellor objected. A contemporary account says: "At this instant it is hardly possible to conceive a more grotesque appearance than the House of Lords presented. Some of their lordships with their hair about their shoulders, others smutted with dirt, most of them as pale as the ghost in *Hamlet*, and all of them standing up in their places and speaking all at once." Some proposed to send for the Guards, the Justices, or the magistrates: outside, the mob was yelling and shouting. This lasted half an hour; then Lord Boston staggered in, half dead, his clothes in rags. The mob had taken him for a Catholic, and threatened to cut the sign of the Cross upon his forehead. He escaped by cleverly contriving to engage the ringleaders in a violent controversy among themselves, whether or no the Pope was Antichrist: in the heat of it he got away. The Lords summoned the Middlesex magistrates before them: they said they had no orders, and that they had only been able to collect eight constables. At eight o'clock the House adjourned, and the Peers slunk home in the dark.

In the House of Commons things had been far worse; the mob burst into the lobbies of the House itself, shouting, "No Popery." Lord George, seconded by a certain Alderman Bull, presented the great petition, and moved that it should be at once

considered in committee. Others moved to consider it on Tuesday, the 6th. But the question was undecided, because the division lobbies were held by the mob, and votes could not legally be taken without a division. Lord George from time to time, harangued his followers, inflaming them: "There is Mr. Burke," said he, "the member for Bristol, speaking against you;" and "Do you know that Lord North calls you a mob?" The mob increased in fury and kicked at the doors. Lord North sent privately for a detachment of the Guards. Colonel Holroyd told Lord George he once thought him a fool, he now knew him a knave; and if he said another word to the mob, he should move for his committal for Newgate. Colonel Murray, Gordon's cousin, said: "My Lord George, do you really mean to bring your rascally adherents into the House of Commons? If you do, the first man that enters, I will plunge my sword, not into his body, but into yours." Gordon was daunted, and retired to the dining-room, where he fell asleep, listening to the moral exhortations of the chaplain. In Gordon's absence the mob in the lobbies grew quiet; outside, gentlemen tried to allay the uproar by conciliatory speeches from the balconies of the neighbouring houses. In this way time was gained for the arrival at nine o'clock of Mr. Addington, a magistrate, with a party of Horse Guards. He told the people that he meant them no harm; if they would disperse, so would the soldiers. At this hundreds of the mob went away, giving three cheers for Mr. Addington. A party of Foot Guards meanwhile cleared the lobbies, and the House was able to divide. Eight votes were given for Gordon's proposal to consider

the petition at once, 194 against it; and the House adjourned till Tuesday. The magistrates and soldiers went home, thinking that all was over. Both Lords and Commons bore their insults, says Dr. Johnson, with great tameness.

But large parties of the rioters that night attacked the Sardinian Catholic Chapel at Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Bavarian Chapel in Warwick Street, two of the very few licenced Catholic chapels belonging to foreign ambassadors. These they burned to the ground. Fire-engines were sent for, but the mob prevented them from being used. The furniture of the Sardinian Chapel was burnt on a public bonfire in the streets. When it was nearly over a party of soldiers arrived and captured thirteen men. Next morning, Saturday, the town was apparently quiet: the House of Lords met and passed Lord Bathurst's motion to prosecute the authors and abettors of the riots. The same evening there was a little rioting in Moorfields; then, as now, a very Catholic quarter. But on the following Sunday afternoon, serious rioting took place there; yet Kennett, the Lord Mayor, locked himself up in the Mansion House, and did nothing. All the Catholic chapels and houses in the district were burnt; the altars, tabernacles, vestments, and so forth, being thrown upon a great bonfire. On Monday afternoon the Privy Council met, and offered a reward for the discovery of the rioters at the Sardinian Chapel, but still took no more energetic steps. The seriousness of the riots was entirely under-estimated.

The riots increased, and the cockades were seen on all sides; the chapels in Wapping and Smithfield were burnt, and the houses of those who had dared

to give evidence against the rioters were plundered. The chief object of attack was the house of Sir George Savile, the mover of the Catholic Relief Bill, in Leicester Fields, now Leicester Square; it was carried by storm, and plundered. The furniture of the chapels was burned in triumph before Lord George's house in Welbeck Street. That dangerous lunatic began to be afraid of his work and of his followers, and he issued a notice disavowing the riots, in the name of the Association. Burke, the great statesman, who favoured Catholic Relief, had to take refuge in the house of General Burgoyne, and he speaks with the deepest grief and shame of the infamous outbreak, which compelled him and his fellow-statesmen to pass the nights guarding each other's houses. At six o'clock that evening, both Houses of Parliament met. Foot Guards were drawn up in Westminster Hall to overawe the mob. Two hundred members of the House of Commons were present, Lord George among them, wearing the blue cockade. Whereupon Colonel Herbert said to him, that if he did not take it out, he would do it for him. Lord George pocketed his cockade. Burke had been surrounded by the rioters, but had pacified them. In the House he made what he considered his finest speech, in which he spoke of "that base gang called the Protestant Association." General Conway moved that the petition be considered when the tumults had subsided, and the House agreed. The rioters went off to attack the Prime Minister's house in Downing Street, but soldiers were on guard, and repulsed them. That day and night were the worst of all. The mob, says Gibbon the historian, "held the town; 40,000 Puritans, such as they might be

in the time of Cromwell, had started out of their graves." The honest fanatics had mostly retired, and the huge mob consisted of the most brutal blackguards. In addition to the cockades, they now sported thick oak cudgels, and, though exact details are hard to find, it is certain that they acted under the secret instructions of men whose motives were more political than religious. Rumours of Papist invasion had been industriously circulated. Lord George became a mere cipher. That evening, at six, came the famous destruction of Newgate, preceded by burnings and plunderings all down Long Acre and Holborn. Blake, the great poet and painter, was forced along with the rioters in their tumultuous advance, and obliged to witness the burning of Newgate. Most of us I suppose, know what Newgate is like; I mean, of course, from the outside; but the Newgate of 1780 was not the Newgate which now stands unused. It had been to a great extent rebuilt in that year, at a cost of £140,000, and was a place of immense strength, holding about three hundred prisoners. The mob ostensibly attacked it to obtain the release of some imprisoned rioters. They surged round the great gates, shouting for Mr. Akerman, the Governor, whom Boswell called "his esteemed friend." He appeared on the roof, and refused to release the prisoners. Dr. Johnson says that he ultimately consented, upon condition of obtaining the Lord Mayor's leave. However that be, the rioters assaulted the great iron-studded gates with axes and sledge-hammers. The Governor's house was meanwhile burnt and pillaged, the mob getting very drunk upon the contents of his cellar. From the Governor's house the flames spread to the chapel, and thence to

the nearest cells, and the cries of the rioters were answered by the cries of the prisoners, either hoping to escape or afraid of being burned. Little impression was made upon the great gates, either by weapons or the flames, but the mob passed in through the breach made by the burning of the Governor's house. The scene was fearful, and it ended in the release of three hundred common thieves and felons of all sorts, including four men condemned to die in a few days. Those four were carried upon the shoulders of the mob through the streets, and Dickens tells us, that old people living in his time remembered to have seen, as children, with fear and trembling, the ghastly faces of those four condemned men passing below their windows.

One of the most interesting accounts of the burning of Newgate is that given by the poet Crabbe, who witnessed it; he describes the prison as being red-hot. That same evening the prison at Clerkenwell was broken open, but the most miserable incident was the burning of Lord Mansfield's house in Bloomsbury Square. They had completely gutted the houses of the few magistrates, such as Sir John Fielding, who showed any activity; and they proceeded to take vengeance upon Lord Mansfield. The mob yelled execrations against him, as a supposed Papist, and he had barely time to escape with Lady Mansfield by the back door. The magnificent house was entirely demolished, the greatest loss being that of the Judge's library, full of books given to him by Pope and Swift and the great writers of the day; with an unrivalled collection of law books, and of legal manuscripts by the Judge himself, and with the memoirs of his time, a work of the

greatest value. Pictures, books, rich furniture and plate, all went upon the bonfire, the rioters making it a point of honour to keep nothing for themselves, but to make a big blaze of all the Popish relics, as they called them. The rioters got drunk as usual, and many were burned or crushed among the ruins. A party of foot-soldiers stood doing nothing, and when a gentleman asked the officer to defend the house, he replied that he could not and would not do anything without authority from the magistrates, and that all the magistrates had run away. At last a stray magistrate was caught; he rushed through the Riot Act, and the soldiers fired two volleys. But the mob was drunk, and did not mind. They marched off, carrying before them the dead bodies of their friends, with weapons in their hands, preceded by a man, ringing Lord Mansfield's dinner-bell. One of Cowper's happiest poems was written upon the loss of Lord Mansfield's library:

So, then, the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to death a nobler pile
That ever Roman saw.

And Murray mourns o'er Pope and Swift,
And many a treasure more;
The well-judged purchase, and the gift,
That graced his lettered store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
The loss was his alone;
But ages yet to come shall mourn
The burning of his own.

Upon the next day, Wednesday the 7th, the riots were at their height. All the great houses, public offices, and institutions were barricaded; terrible rumours flew round the town; the lunatics were to be let out of Bedlam, the lions out of the Tower, and,

worst of all, 70,000 Scotch Protestants out of Scotland. All shops were shut, and, for protection's sake, "No Popery" was chalked upon the door. Even the Jews in Hounsditch wrote upon their doors, "This is the house of a true Protestant." Rioters went calmly through the streets, demanding money from shops and passengers, walking singly; three of them were mere boys, armed with iron bars from Lord Mansfield's railings. One man on horseback would take nothing but gold. "On Wednesday," wrote Dr. Johnson, "I walked with Dr. Scott to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. As I went by, the Protestants were plundering the Sessions House at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed, in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place. On Wednesday, they broke open the Fleet, and the King's Bench, and the Marshalsea, and released all the prisoners. At night they set fire to the Fleet and to the King's Bench, and I do not know how many other places; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The sight was dreadful."

Pitt, the great statesman, then a young barrister at Lincoln's Inn, describes the old courts and squares surrounded with fires; but though the rioters besieged the Inns of Court, they did not break through. Burke's brother dates a letter from "the place that once was London." The toll-gates on Blackfriars Bridge were robbed of their takings, and then burned. Thirty-six distinct great fires were to be seen from a distance. Among the places attacked

was the brewery of Mr. Thrale in Southwark, now Barclay and Perkins', but he only lost, writes his friend Dr. Johnson, a few butts of beer. Two attempts were made upon the Bank of England, led by a man on a brewer's horse, hung with chains from Newgate, both in vain; one was driven off by a party under the command of Jack Wilkes, who declared that were he in power, he would not leave one rioter alive. In Holborn, horrible scenes took place at the burning of a great distillery, kept by Mr. Langdale, a Catholic; all the contents of the great vaults were poured into the street, where they caught fire, and the drunken mob, with women and children among them, were seen rolling in the flames, and lapping up the liquid fire. Horace Walpole, who calls the fires "the most horrible sight he ever beheld," remarks that the fashionable world seemed to take no notice; theatres and entertainments, dinners and dances, went on as usual.

Still, the Government did nothing, though plenty of soldiers were in readiness: by the 7th, 10,000 men were assembled, and the militia came up from several counties. The difficulty was the question about the Riot Act: had the soldiers legal right to fire, unless it had been read by a magistrate? George III. was the first man to do his duty. He had shown great courage, having spent two nights in readiness to command the troops, should the mob attack the Queen or the Palace: and he had a great pity for the misguided rioters. "Poor creatures," he said, "they did not mean mischief." He called a Privy Council, and laid the question before them: the whole Cabinet was in doubt. But Wedderburn, the Attorney-General, who was present as a legal assistant,

said the soldiers might fire without the Riot Act: if the riot had actually begun, no formalities were necessary. The Ministers agreed: and the King said he had thought so all along. "There shall be at all events," said he, "one magistrate in the country, who will do his duty." A Proclamation was issued, warning all householders, servants, and apprentices, to stay indoors: and that the King's officers had full power to suppress the riots. "In obedience to an Order of the King in Council, the military are to act without waiting for directions from the civil magistrates." The rioters were checked for the first time, troops and militia were stationed at various points. Colonel Holroyd led the Northumberland Militia, after a forced march of twenty-five miles, to Holborn, where the fires were raging, and the Guards drove back the mob at Blackfriars. Many were shot down, many threw themselves into the river. They had few fire-arms, and the whole city was awake, listening to the sounds of the soldiers firing and the rioters shrieking. The soldiers' bayonets are said to have literally dripped with blood. According to official returns, only 200 rioters were shot; 250 of the wounded were taken to the hospital, of whom 80 died. But the real numbers were many times more than that: digging among the ruins the workmen came upon innumerable remains of burnt and mangled bodies. On the morning of Thursday, the 8th, there was no trace of the mob, except the ruined houses and the blood in the streets. Soldiers were encamped in the Parks, the Museum Garden, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and elsewhere. Many rioters were captured in the ruined cells of Newgate trying to renew the fire. Voluntary associations were formed

"for the defence of liberty and property." The shops were still shut from Tyburn to Whitechapel, only the Bank of England did business. But next day confidence returned, the law courts and the shops were opened.

Cowper writes that day from the country to a friend, "By this time, I suppose, you have ventured to take your fingers out of your ears, being delivered from the deafening shouts of the most zealous mob that ever strained their lungs in the cause of religion." Pitt writes that "we may now sleep again as in a Christian country." Gibbon writes: "Our danger is at an end, but our disgrace will be lasting, and the month of June, 1780, will ever be marked by a dark and diabolic fanaticism, which I had supposed to be extinct." I might quote many other accounts, such as those of Bishop Challoner and Miss Burney, and the accounts of the riots at Bath and Bristol, by Mrs. Thrale.[1]

On the 9th, Lord George Gordon was arrested at his house in Welbeck Street, upon a warrant from the Secretary of State. "If you are sure it is me you want," said his lordship, "I am ready to attend you." He was examined before the Privy Council, where he behaved like a child. He was taken by a detachment of the Guards to the Tower, with the strongest escort ever known to attend a prisoner. The public was still not fully reassured that all was over; the insidious

[1] She writes to Dr. Johnson from Bath: "The mad fools here hooted a poor inoffensive man till he scampered over the wall, and said they were sure he must be the Pope, because he lodged on St. James's Parade, and wore a nightgown with gold flowers on it." And upon the arrival of the soldiers, she writes: "Toryism and martial law and standing armies for ever; and when the Papists are all burned, and the Protestants all hanged for burning them, the Jews may jump for joy. I think no one else can be pleased."

libels of the Protestant agitators had taken too firm a hold upon the minds of those credulous persons to whom a Catholic is a kind of fabulous creature. It had to be authoritatively denied that martial law was to prevail, and the rumours about the Royal Family and their household being concealed Catholics were so numerous, that the Lord Chamberlain was forced to insert in the papers such absurd advertisements as this, "We are authorized to assure the public that Mr. Bicknell, His Majesty's hosier, is as true and faithful a Protestant as any in His Majesty's dominions. We likewise have the best authority for saying that His Majesty's wine-merchants are Protestants."[1]

Among all self-respecting classes there was a strong feeling that the authorities had not done their duty: the Lord Mayor was tried, and convicted of gross neglect. Alderman Bull, Lord George's seconder, had actually encouraged the rioters, allowing the constables in his ward to wear the blue cockade. On the 12th, Parliament met, and there was a speech from the Throne. The Peers discussed the legal question of the Riot Act; Lord Mansfield defended the doctrine of the Royal Proclamation whilst strongly attacking the magistrates. As to the legal question, he said, "I have not consulted books, indeed, I have no books to consult." His legal opponent retorted that because his law books were burned, he need not think no other lawyer had any books. But the House approved of his famous contention, that soldiers firing upon rioters without

[1] The delusion that Catholicism was encouraged and patronized by the Government and by the Executive, finds expression in some of the political satires scribbled by the unfortunate Chatterton, a few years before the outbreak of the Gordon Riots.

civil authority act, not as soldiers in red coats, but as citizens in brown. An address to the King was carried, thanking him for his prompt action. The next day the great Protestant petition was discussed in the House of Commons, and five resolutions were proposed by Burke, and carried, after alterations by Lord North. They insisted upon the retention of the Catholic Relief Bill of two years past, but they also insisted upon the criminality of making converts to Catholicism.

It was on this occasion that Fox made his great speech in favour of universal toleration. Sir George Savile, the original Protestant champion of the Catholics, had been frightened by the riots: and he brought in a Bill to guard against Catholic conversions. No Catholic was to keep a school or to have young boarders in his house: music and dancing masters, for no very obvious reason, were alone exempted. No Catholic was to keep a Protestant apprentice. In spite of Burke's protest against these ungenerous laws, they were carried: Burke declaring that Savile had "a greater prejudice against the Catholics than became so wise a mind." The Bill was thrown out in the Lords. At the end of the Sessions, Lord North moved for an exact return of the damage done by the riots, and claims were sent in to the amount of £130,000. Lord Mansfield and Sir George Savile refused compensation. On the 10th of July a Special Commission sat in Southwark to try the rioters; and on July 28th others were tried in Middlesex at the Old Bailey Sessions. By the end of July all the rioters had been tried: 135 in all, of whom one half were found guilty. Burke wrote many letters in vain, pleading for mercy

towards them: 21 were hanged. Of these, some were boys under fourteen; and George Selwyn, a well-known man about town, who enjoyed the fashionable amusement of seeing executions, wrote in his diary, that he "had never seen boys cry so," which was not surprising. Among those sentenced to death, but reprieved, was Dennis the hangman. Dickens, who represents him as hanged, violates history for picturesque effect. Lord George was tried in February, 1781, his trial having been delayed upon some technical plea. Erskine, the great orator, was his counsel: he made a splendid speech, urging that Gordon had done all he could to stop the riots. Lord Mansfield, who was the judge, summed up against him, but he was acquitted of treason, to the great satisfaction of Dr. Johnson; not for Gordon's sake, but because he held very rightly, that constructive treason is no true charge. Either a man commits treason, or no: you cannot add together a number of acts, each separately not treason, and call the result treason. Hannah More tells us that "the noble prisoner, as the papers call him, had a large Bible open before him all the time, and was very angry, because he was not permitted to read four chapters from Zachariah." Public thanksgivings were offered up in many chapels for his acquittal, and the obstinate Scotch Protestants subscribed £500 towards his defence. The rest of Lord George's life was strange enough; he was excommunicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury for refusing to give evidence before an ecclesiastical court. In 1782, he was convicted of libelling Marie Antoinette, the French Queen—a fact alluded to by Burke in his *Reflections upon the French Revolution*

when he contrasts the behaviour of the English, who would not allow an Englishman to insult the Queen of France, with that of the French, who drove her from the throne to prison and to death—but before receiving sentence, Gordon fled to Amsterdam. The Dutch burghers sent him home again, and he lived in one of the dirtiest slums of Birmingham, where he turned Jew, and adopted Jewish customs and dress. He called himself the Right Hon. Israel Bar Abraham George Gordon. He wore a long beard, and refused to speak to any Jew who did not. He was arrested in December for contempt of court, and committed to Newgate, then rebuilt. There he lived till his death, at the age of forty-three, in 1793, supporting himself by painting, and conducting himself extravagantly. His last great grief was, that he must be buried in the prison ground, and not in a Jewish cemetery.

I have now given a rough sketch of these great riots. If any one wish to read the finest comment upon them, let me refer him to Burke's magnificent speech in 1780 to his constituents at Bristol, upon his support of Catholic relief. It lost him his seat, but it does him lasting honour. It is appropriate to conclude with a moral. If we go over Thames into Southwark, we shall find what Shakespeare calls a "sermon in stones." The rioters assembled in St. George's Fields, Southwark, then open ground. Upon that ground now stand two remarkable buildings. One is the lunatic asylum of Bethlehem, commonly called Bedlam; the other is the Catholic Cathedral of St. George.

Alexis Clerc.

(1819-1871.)

By Lady Amabel Kerr.

In days gone by the birthright of every Frenchman was faith—that faith which had earned for his country the name of the eldest daughter of the Church, and for his king the title of most Christian. But those days are over, and it may be said that now, on the contrary, the birthright of the majority of Frenchmen is infidelity and irreligion.

Scarce thirty years before the birth of Alexis Clerc, in 1819, the French people had turned savagely against all that used to be their pride and glory. Driven beyond endurance by the class tyranny to which they had for years been subjected, and revolted by the luxury of the court and nobility, they, blindly connecting the evil doings of their rulers with the authority which they represented, swept away every law and institution both Divine and human. They slew their king and countless prelates, nobles, and ladies on the scaffold, and then, possessed by their defiance of law and order, they turned against Almighty God with frenzied hatred and, with

rash presumption, thought to dethrone Him as they had dethroned their king. They abolished His worship by law, and set up the goddess of reason to be worshipped in His stead. They discarded the Christian era because it was Christian, and did all that their ingenuity could suggest to express their defiance of their God.

It is true that by degrees and under various forms of government the outward observance of religion resumed more or less its former condition, but irreligion had gained a terrible victory, the effects of which have been deep and lasting; and generations of Frenchmen have since then been born into this world, inheriting, as a birthright, a hatred of God and of His holy Church.

Such was the case with Alexis Clerc, in whom God's grace so wonderfully overcame the tainted legacy bequeathed to him.

His father, who was an infidel and ardent disciple of Voltaire, would have had his children brought up entirely in his own principles, but, happily for them, their mother was a good Catholic woman. She was one of many in France who, in spite of all efforts to uproot religion, have lived splendid Christian lives in the midst of infidelity, doing, generation after generation, the work which the ten just might have done for Sodom. She did what she could for her children. She had them baptized, though she did not succeed in procuring their reception of any other sacraments, they being probably sent from her to godless schools at too early an age. All Alexis's recollections of his mother were connected with religion, and the vellum bound book of lives of the Saints, which she used to read to him, and which filled his little mind with noble aspirations and desires to imitate them. She died when he was thirteen, an inmate of a school where, as he has himself described it, the training was the ideal of education without God; and where, alas, the life and its temptations soon destroyed his early desires for sanctity.

To his Christian mother's example, and still more probably to her prayers, he owed it that in spite of his

anti-Catholic training, received both at school and under his father's roof, and in spite of the life of sin and excesses which, according to his own account, he led as a boy and young man, he never conceived any hatred of religion, such as reigned then and still reigns in France among those who oppose themselves to the Catholic Church. His complete indifference, however, on all subjects connected with faith or morals could not well be surpassed. At the time of his conversion he attributed the grace received to his mother's prayers; and when he heard that his brother Jules had also turned to God, he concluded his congratulations by these words: "We must neither of us forget that holy woman who is stretching out her arms to us from on high, and who, assuredly, has been calling to us with all her might." Many years afterwards, when Jules had married a good Catholic wife, Alexis wrote thus to his sister-in-law: "If your husband and I had not learnt the truths of religion at the knees of a woman as sweet and gentle as she was Christian, it is very likely that after all our years of forgetfulness of Him, God's grace might have knocked in vain at our hearts; and you would not have now at your side him whose just, noble, pure and loyal heart you both love and appreciate."

After passing from one godless school to another, Alexis finished his education at the Polytechnic, from which he passed at the age of twenty-two by an examination the brilliancy of which opened to him the doors of any profession he chose to adopt. To the surprise of everybody he chose the Navy, his choice being dictated less by a strong vocation for a sea life than by his innate antipathy to any sedentary or commercial occupation.

On the 1st of October, 1841, he was appointed to the *Triomphante*, bound for the Pacific. He was entered as an "*aspirant*," a grade which now technically corresponds with our naval cadet, but which was then something totally different, as can be seen by the case of Alexis Clerc himself. He, a young man of twenty-two, and highly educated, entered the Navy with no knowledge whatever of naval matters, having to learn his duties as

best he could, or not to learn them at all, as the case might be, and holding, moreover, no position as an officer. He had passed the most brilliant examinations at his colleges, but he found that nothing of this served him in his new career, and that, in fact, the students of the Polytechnic, instead of standing on a pinnacle as they did on shore, were positively looked down on in the Navy ; and that he himself had everything to learn from those whose education could not be compared with his own, and who were by no means his equals either socially or intellectually.

As soon as this truth dawned upon him he set to work energetically to apply the remedy, and gathered all the information he could from his shipmates. He learnt the names and uses of the ropes, and took lessons in knotting, splicing, &c., from a mere lad, one of his mess-mates, who, having entered the Navy from a training ship, was well qualified to teach him. That he succeeded in triumphing over all obstacles and in becoming an efficient officer, can be gathered from the certificate given to him by Captain Péraud at the end of what may almost be called his four years' apprenticeship in the Pacific. "He is an active officer, and his services are valuable," it says. "He has a taste for naval life, and a practical knowledge of his duties rarely found in those who have entered the service from the Polytechnic."

The four years which Alexis passed on the Pacific station were tedious ones to him, filling the anomalous position he did, but they were fruitful years for his soul, without which, perhaps, he might have never turned to God. The *Triomphante* was stationed for some little time at the Gambier Islands, and there Alexis, with the rest of the officers, made acquaintance with the French missionary fathers.

These missionaries had in eight years converted all the natives of these Islands from a state of the lowest and most bestial idolatry into faithful and intelligent Catholics. The men were hard working and honest, the women good wives and good mothers, and all the children were learning rapidly in various schools, the older boys

being already sufficiently advanced to be taught Latin. A church had been erected of hewn stone by the labour and ingenuity of native workmen, and there, at the invitation of the missionaries, the officers and men of the *Triomphante* heard Mass, and were astonished by the devout and intelligent behaviour of the islanders who, during Mass, sang hymns in their native tongue, composed for them by the French Fathers.

Alexis, as has been said, was, though indifferent, neither scoffing nor actively irreligious, and the effect produced on him by what he saw and heard while at the Gambier Islands was indescribable. The transformation effected in such a short time by the teachings of the Catholic Faith appeared to him to be something altogether supernatural, and struck a chord in his insensible heart which, though it produced no practical change in his life as yet, never ceased to vibrate as long as he lived.

Almighty God, Who desired to win this precious soul for Himself, so ordained things that when Alexis returned to France after his four years' service in the Pacific, in order to pass his examination for the rank of "*enseigne*" (or technically, midshipman), he took passage in the frigate *La Charte*. One of her officers, by name Joubert, was a devout Christian. During the passage, Alexis formed a close acquaintance with this young man, and their friendship had much influence on his future search for God.

It was probably at Joubert's suggestion that as soon as he arrived in France, and after he had passed his examination, he devoted himself to a dispassionate study of the Christian religion, which appealed to his logical mind, and ere long he professed himself to be thoroughly convinced intellectually of the truth of the Catholic Faith. Still, the dark misdeeds of his past life hung over him like a cloud, and neither his own sense of what was right, nor the persuasions of his Catholic friends could induce him to make his peace with God, and approach the sacraments. He was ordered at a few days' notice to join the *Caiman*, destined for service on the West Coast of Africa, and he left France for at least two years, still, practically, a wanderer outside the Church.

But the grace of God still pursued him.

He had left France in a far from happy frame of mind. He was absolutely alone, and letter after letter, written even to his unsympathetic, atheistic father, contains the cry for some one to help him. In his mental solitude he wove web within web around him till he almost persuaded himself that if he did obey the promptings of his heart and boldly placed himself on the side of our Lord Jesus Christ, it would be out of mere self-love and gratification to his pride; though in his truer moments he owned that it was nothing but sloth and pusillanimity which kept him back.

God hearkened to his cry for help, and sent him that for which his soul craved.

Two missionaries took passage to Gaboon in the *Caiman*, and daily intercourse with them broke down the barriers which Alexis had been piling up against grace. In their company he boldly maintained the cause of religion, much to the surprise of his fellow officers. He then begged a catechism from one of the missionaries, and set to work to study his religion in a humble and childlike spirit. His resistance to grace grew feebler under this process, and in December, 1846, he made a general confession in St. Mary's Church, Gaboon.

It is interesting to learn that almost simultaneously with the conversion of Alexis, his brother Jules cast off his religious indifference and turned to God. The letters of the two brothers, announcing to each other the glad tidings almost crossed.

After another few months on the West Coast of Africa, that region which had proved so fruitful in blessings to Alexis Clerc, the *Caiman* returned to France in the summer of 1847.

Everything was now changed to Alexis. Christian both by conviction and in practice, his life during the next seven years was but one gradual process of weaning from the things of this earth, and each day that he lived in the world he became less of it. He was scarcely aware of it himself, but as a matter of fact his soul had caught the faint sound of a far away voice which had

said to him, "Friend, go up higher;" and the sound, distant as it was, had drowned all others to him, and rang ever louder and louder in his ears, until at last, as we shall see, he gladly gave his life's blood to obey its call.

What was passing in his mind is more or less revealed in a letter to his friend Joubert, written soon after his return to France. "You," he says, "have preceded me in the narrow way, and you possess the joy of having quite broken with the world. Remember me in your prayers, and pity me. I often feel that I am trying to serve two masters. . . . . I long for what is an impossibility, *i.e.*, to bind my will once and for ever to what is right. Living as I do in the world, temptations assail me under such a manifold aspect, that it requires all God's help to keep me from falling: and yet in the turmoil of life which sweeps me along with it, it is difficult to find leisure for either recollection or prayer."

While Joubert, Jules, and his other Christian friends rejoiced at his conversion, the event was far from being popular with the majority of his acquaintances, to whom he had endeared himself by his gaiety and pleasant social qualities, and who now feared that he would be lost to them. Here in England a Christian commands respect even where he may find no sympathy; but in France the hatred borne to Christianity is very logical and very real; so much so, that for a man to declare himself a Christian is to expose himself to unutterable contempt. However, courage, both moral and physical, was a quality in which Alexis Clerc was not wanting, and he made no disguise of his conversion. He did not even wince when called or esteemed a fool, being convinced that the real folly lies in not being on our Lord's side and endeavouring to walk in His footsteps. He soon found means of silencing those who made impertinent remarks.

"What is this that I hear?" was the greeting of one of his former mess-mates. "It never can be true that you have become a Jesuit?" Knowing very well in what sense the term "Jesuit" was used by the irreligious, Clerc promptly replied: "Of course I have; and so would any man of sense or intelligence, provided

he were not totally ignorant!" "His tone, his manner, and the expression in his eyes," says the author of the ill-timed sneer, who has himself handed down the story, "were such that I saw that I had better say no more, and I went away resolved never to return to the subject."

All this time that his thoughts were so full of God, and of his duty towards Him, he was serving in his profession with a keenness which he had not known before. He threw into his work all his great mental powers and his scientific knowledge acquired at the Polytechnic, nor was the Government slow to appreciate the value of his services. During the four years which followed his return from Africa, he was employed at the home ports of Brest and Lorient, and in the dockyard island of Indret, being successively attached to the *Caffarelli*, the *Caravane*, the *Duguesclin*, and the *Pélican*. At that time the French navy, like every other navy in the civilized world, was at the commencement of a transition state caused by the introduction of steam as a mode of locomotion. It was still in its infancy, both machinery and engines being in a very rudimentary state; and it was for the trial of these, and for experiments with new inventions that Clerc, together with other scientific officers was employed.

A letter written to Jules soon after he had made a spiritual retreat at La Trappe de la Meilleraie, gives us the clue to his devotion to his duty, as well as to the secret of his success in his profession.

During this retreat he apparently arrived at the conclusion that, whatever views God might have for him in the future, he was not called on to give up his profession at once to "go up higher." The following words of his apply to his own career as he then viewed it: "The choice of a career is one of the most important that a man is called on to make. It is rarely that he is permitted to give up the one he has already chosen, although he is equally rarely contented with his first choice. . . . . The reason why we choose wrongly is that we choose without God. We ought to have no end in view but the supreme end of eternal life. If, divesting ourselves of all ideas of ambition, gain, or self-

gratification, we look on our career as the road by which we have to travel in order to reach God, and as the means of pleasing Him in this life, and of accomplishing the work He has given us to do, asking Him with faith and submission for light to know His will,—then most certainly He will help us and bless our work."

While Alexis was throwing himself so heartily into his naval duties, he was neglecting neither his duty towards himself, nor his duty towards his neighbour.

The varied nature of his professional employment gave him long periods of complete leisure. These he employed in a severe course of reading. His chief study and delight was the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas, which, though he first mastered its style and contents with the utmost difficulty, was his constant companion to the hour of his death. The solemn nature of his favourite literature drew down on him no small amount of ridicule from the most kindly disposed of his naval friends, which, however, he parried with a constant gaiety and good humour which disarmed all attacks.

The way in which he first made acquaintance with the *Summa* is so characteristic that it must be recorded. When he returned from Africa, he was acutely conscious of his ignorance of the religion he professed. His highly trained scientific mind craved for a greater knowledge of the science of the Christian religion, and how to supply his deficiencies occupied his thoughts a great deal. One day as he was walking in Paris, full, as usual, of this one engrossing problem, he met a priest, who was an utter stranger to him. Yielding to the impulse of the moment, he raised his hat politely and accosted him thus:

"Pardon me, Monsieur l'Abbé, but will you kindly tell me which author has written best on the subject of religion?"

"St. Thomas Aquinas," was the unhesitating reply.

"And in which of his works?"

"In the *Summa Theologica*."

"Thank you a thousand times," replied Alexis; and hurrying off he forthwith procured a copy of the work.

During this period of his life he was full of a really

apostolic zeal for the souls of others. Among the naval officers with whom he was thrown, he found, on closer acquaintance, several who were either secretly Christian, or else disposed to be convinced. To more than one, the words and example of Alexis Clerc served as the turning point in their lives; and it is remarkable what a number of vocations to the priesthood were developed in this particular group of officers.

He was the most active member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, being indeed, in the words of Abbé Guillet, the priest at Indret, worth, in his single person, a whole Conference of the Society. In whatever ship he belonged to, he worked indefatigably for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the men, being nobly supported by his various superior officers, especially by Captain Bourgeois of the *Pélican*, who has left on record an account of the useful work carried on by him. "I have to search very far back in my memory to tell you what you want to know," he writes to Father Daniel, the author of the life of Father Clerc, to which we owe all our acquaintance with him. "I shall, however, never forget the conscientiousness and thoughtfulness shown on every occasion by this young officer. He united the advantages of a solid education to a noble and honourable character, and gave every promise of being a distinguished naval officer. Even in those days he showed the greatest desire to be of use to his fellow creatures. We had started classes for the sailors, which were intended to embrace the whole crew. Every evening, when the duties on board allowed of it, tables were set up on the half deck, and Clerc conducted the classes with admirable patience and intelligence. He gave a course of higher instruction to those among the men who wished either to qualify as masters in the merchant service, or to advance to higher grades in the Navy. Since then I have come across several who were benefited by his instructions, and were able to make a career for themselves. One and all expressed the utmost gratitude for the lessons which had facilitated their efforts."

His brother was always the object of Alexis's most

tender solicitude; and Jules, though the elder of the two, leant for support and advice on his younger brother. Removed both by temperament and position from the turmoil of the political world, Alexis watched every vicissitude in the history of his country with the eye, not of a politician, but of a Catholic. In all the phases of the Revolution of 1848 he studied only how they would affect the cause of the Church and religion, and he foresaw many disastrous consequences which those drawn into the vortex of politics were blind to see. He was, therefore, very anxious about Jules, who, for a time, was quite carried away by political excitement, and saw in the course of events a new birth and new life for the Church where Alexis could perceive only the forerunners of anarchy and irreligion.

"I honour you for your devotion to public affairs," he writes, "but why are you so harassed and anxious? Do be more calm. Do not lose yourself in the whirlpool which is absorbing your life and which cannot produce any good result. Ten minutes of prayer are worth all the politics in the world, and prayer, moreover, is the only good and true policy, for it is Providence which governs our lives.

As affairs precipitated themselves, and blood flowed freely, the Archbishop of Paris, Monsignor Affre, himself falling a victim to popular fury, Alexis saw the hand of God in what was taking place more clearly than ever.

"Though," he writes to Jules, "we have, as far as I know, no personal loss to deplore, we have enough to do in mourning for our country, and in praying for her. May these terrible chastisements expiate our crimes, and may it please God to accept the heroic devotion of a few as the price of such general indifference and egotism. Let us open our eyes and judge of the trees of these new doctrines by their fruits. I have a hope that misfortune may purify and sanctify our nation. O if God will this to be, we shall be saved indeed!"

While Alexis was fulfilling the duties of his state so faithfully, and devoting himself so lovingly to the wel-

fare of his neighbour, he treated himself with such rigour, and practised such severe mortifications, that good Captain Bourgeois felt it to be his duty to interfere paternally. His works of charity were, of course, a great drain on his purse, and he made this the occasion of practising a rigid economy, and of depriving himself of the most harmless pleasures. The habitually empty condition of his cigarette-case was a standing joke among his friends—a joke in which he cheerfully joined. He divided his pay into three equal portions. One third he gave to his father, who was not well off, another part he put aside for the poor, and the third he reserved for himself. On this reserved portion he freely encroached for the benefit of others, it being his standing maxim that all superfluities belong to the poor. Superfluities, however, is an elastic term, and it was the common opinion of his friends that it was rather necessaries of which he deprived himself.

The mention of his father and the assistance which he rendered to him, brings us to the relationship which existed between Monsieur Clerc and his son. They were on the most affectionate terms, and their correspondence shows that the greatest intimacy existed between them. Next to Joubert, his father was the first person to whom he wrote from Africa to announce his conversion. "I am doing all I can, my dear father," he wrote, "to become a good man, by which I mean a religious man, for there is no real goodness except in religion." These sentiments were not likely to be very pleasing to the old disciple of Voltaire; still, Monsieur Clerc does not appear to have objected to the conversion of either of his sons, so long as it did not interfere with their worldly interests. He was proud of Alexis, and had, perhaps, a greater tenderness for this son, who was so seldom at home, than for Jules, who was always with him.

It need scarcely be said that Alexis, who was so solicitous about the spiritual welfare of his brother, and so full of zeal for the souls of others, was most terribly anxious about his sceptical old father; nor was it God's will that his anxiety should ever be set at rest in this

life. Each of his letters grows in urgency. "How can I describe how much I wish that you shared our faith," he writes. . . "My strongest wish in this world is to see you sharing our religious beliefs."

Monsieur Clerc, fencing with the real question, wrote in reply, vaguely assuring his son that he was quite ready to believe if only he were convinced, and that he put no obstacle in the way. He was, however, quite satisfied in his own mind, and being anxious to keep well with his sons, was content that they should be as they were. All the same, he evidently thought that Alexis's religious views were becoming too extreme, and that his apostolic zeal was growing a little dangerous, and sought a remedy by making arrangements for a suitable marriage for him. He proposed to him as his future wife a very good and charming girl who lived near Brest, and with whom Alexis could have every opportunity of making acquaintance. It was a thunderbolt to him when his son wrote back that he had no intention of ever marrying!

Yes, it had come to that. The far-away whisper of which he had caught the faint sound four years before was now ringing more clearly in his ears. He had just been promoted to the rank of lieutenant, and his services on the coast of Brittany had favourably attracted the notice of the authorities; but in spite of his prospects of success and in spite of all arguments used by the best priests and laymen, an irresistible sense of dissatisfaction grew within him. Notwithstanding his honest efforts to throw himself into his naval duties and good works, he yearned to be something different from what he was. "I am not satisfied," he said one day to Abbé Guillet, "and I do not believe that my actual state is that which God wills for me. I am not, I know, worthy to be a priest, but if only at this moment the Pope were to raise a Catholic army, I would go to him at once and offer him my sword. 'Holy Father,' I would say, 'I am your man.'" "My dear friend," protested Monsieur Guillet, "I believe that you are in exactly your right place; for if it is necessary to have good priests and religious, it is equally necessary to have good Christians

in the world, to edify it by their example, and to prove that it is possible to be a true Christian in every state of life."

Alexis tried to be convinced, but it was impossible. The interior voice spoke more distinctly than the voice of any man, however wise or holy, and in the spring of 1850, he felt impelled to make a retreat under Père de Ravignan, and urgently asked to be admitted into the Society of Jesus. But God's time was not yet come, and Père de Ravignan refused to receive him, at any rate for the present. So Alexis returned to his old work at Brest to wait God's time, having the sincere conviction that it was only a case of waiting, and that the time would come at last when he might lawfully obey the voice which had called him. From henceforward he looked on himself as, as it were, a day labourer in his profession, and lived in readiness to give up it and every thing else at a moment's notice.

He wrote to his father and described to him his present position, and his transitory views about his naval life. "I do not wish you to misunderstand me," he wrote, "even though we both quite agree that I must *wait*. I wish I could convey to you an idea of the splendid vistas of hope which the very word conjures up; but I know that instead of filling your heart with joy, I should only cause you pain. . . . . Most likely, I shall just follow the course of events, and leave it to God to place me with, as it were, His own Hand wheresoever He will. . . . . I do not propose to leave my present state by any effort of my own will. . . . . I remain a sailor, quite ready to cease to be one to-morrow, if it please God. I assure you that I should feel it to be no sacrifice. After all that I have said, I am sure that you will agree with me that it is better that I should not think of marriage for the present. I see the prospect before me of another voyage, and before I return to France, a thousand things may have happened. Anyhow, I do not care to look so far ahead. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'" And with this much or this little, Monsieur Clerc had to be satisfied.

The new voyage to which he alluded was one which

went far towards making his waiting easier to him; and even though it turned out to be practically of a different nature from what he had anticipated, the prospect of it filled him with enthusiasm. It was the purpose of the Government to send a vessel to China, to inquire into and afford protection to the French missions there; the command of the expedition being confided to Captain Robinet de Plas, an avowed Catholic, and a man of singular piety. The selection of his officers was left almost entirely to himself, and his first choice fell on Alexis Clerc, with whom he had formed an intimate friendship at Brest, and whom he eventually followed into the Society of Jesus. Alexis joyfully accepted the post of junior lieutenant, his heart being kindled not only with enthusiasm about the avowed object of the cruise, but with delight and gratitude that the French Government should undertake such an enterprise. In writing to his father, he proudly reminds him of the many occasions, since the days when Clovis overcame the Arians, when France had proved herself to be the shield and sword of the Church. "God," he says, "has made France to be the right arm and the temporal power of His spiritual kingdom. There is not, there cannot be, a higher destiny for any State. Our authority ought to be as universal as that of the Pope; it belongs to us to protect Christians all over the world." If this be, indeed, the mission and birthright of France, well might her children weep tears of blood at her degradation from her high estate!

The *Cassini*, which was the name of the vessel appointed for this special service, left Lorient on the 6th of March, 1851, in a manner befitting her mission. As she left the anchorage, she fired a salute in honour of the Sanctuary of Notre Dame de l'Armor, while the priests who were on board, joined by the crew, chanted the *Ave maris stella*. Two Bishops, two vicars-general, three missionary priests, Abbé Cambier, temporally attached to the *Cassini* as chaplain, and, finally, three nuns of the Order of St. Joseph, were passengers on board. The Abbé Cambier has left on record an account of the officers, in which he dwells with special admiration

on the captain and the two lieutenants, Bernaert and Clerc. Of the latter he says: "If he remains in the navy, his future ought to be a brilliant one. But I should not be the least surprised if he exchanges his uniform for a cassock. A naval uniform is, undoubtedly, an honourable garb, but the habit of a priest is far more so. However, it must be for God to give it with the vocation."

After a few words in praise of the sailors, who, being for the most part Bretons, were not, he says, afraid of the sight of a priest, he goes on to describe the life on board such as it existed under the auspices of Captain de Plas. "Every morning at six, when at sea, and at five in harbour, I recited the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and a prayer which I had written for the sailors; and in the evening, after the hammocks were slung, I said night prayers for the whole crew. On Tuesday, I had a catechism class for the boys. On Sundays, Mass was said at a quarter past ten, with an instruction on the Gospel when we were in harbour. At sea I gave the instruction later. The bell was rung for every service, and anybody came who wished it. We had a real chapel on board, the captain having converted the cabin under the poop into one; and in this chapel we had the inestimable joy of having the Blessed Sacrament reserved. Yes, the *Cassini* bore within her the God of the universe, Him Who walked on the Sea of Galilee, and Who, with a word, calmed the tempest."

During the whole four years' commission of the *Cassini*, Alexis did a truly apostolic work among his fellow officers, several of whom had received an early Catholic education, but who had long ago given up all practice of their religion. Two of these have left interesting accounts of the work which Clerc did for their souls: he seemed to live only for their conversion. Had he been a different man from what he was, such a life would have been impossible. "The tact and boundless charity which Alexis Clerc possessed," wrote Captain de Plas, "added to his constant readiness to oblige his shipmates, made things possible for him to do,

which, had others attempted them, might have given rise to disagreeables and even quarrels. But nothing of the sort ever occurred."

It would not be possible to describe the events which took place during the time that the *Cassini* was stationed in China. Though her duties were by no means as entirely Christian as Clerc had fondly hoped, still, during the numerous riots and rebellions which were constantly taking place, Captain de Plas and his ship's crew were able to be of the greatest service to the Jesuit missionaries there. With these fathers, Alexis formed the closest friendship, being fired with zeal and enthusiasm by the accounts of the sufferings they had undergone for the Faith, and fully profiting by the counsels and assistance of those resident at Shanghai.

There, in that far-off land, he found the peace and certainty which he had vainly sought in his own country. He made a retreat under the direction of Father Languillat, and with his full sanction made the solemn resolution to enter the Society of Jesus as soon as the *Cassini* returned to France. He had not long to wait. The ship was ere long ordered home, and anchored off Lorient in July, 1855.

Alexis wished to carry out his intention without delay; but now a new obstacle met him. During the absence of the *Cassini*, war had been declared with Russia, and this was not the time for a naval officer to retire from the service. He at once volunteered for active employment, but it so happened that all available appointments had been filled up, and his services were declined. He could now retire without dishonour; and there only remained his home difficulties to meet.

His duty towards his father was much simplified by his brother's marriage with a good Christian girl, which enabled Jules to offer a home to the old man. He went, therefore, to St. Acheul, where he was received into the Jesuit noviciate, and from there he wrote most affectionately to announce to his father his determination to embrace the religious life. He reminded him of how constant he had been to his purpose for the last four years, arguing that now that all obstacles on the part

of the Society were removed, he could not do otherwise than carry it out. He moreover proved to him that far from being more separated from him than before, he would for the first time since he had reached manhood, be living within easy reach of him.

But the old man was implacable. He could endure that his son should be a Christian, and patiently suffered him to try to save his soul, provided that he did so in the world ; but to enter a religious order, and especially the hated Society of Jesus, was an unpardonable sin. Very likely the fact that Alexis had been offered his promotion to the rank of commander, and also the decoration of the legion of honour made his retirement from the Navy more bitter to the worldly old Voltairian. "I adjure you, by all the authority which a father can exercise over his son," was his response to Alexis's announcement, "to postpone the step, anyhow until the war is over. If you do not grant this my request, all intercourse between us must cease."

This was indeed a trial to his son's very affectionate heart. Never had man to weigh and measure our Lord's words, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" more carefully in the balance than Alexis had to do now. It is hardly necessary to say that his love of God won the day, and he wrote to his father to tell him that his decision was final. His father's decision was also final, and though, perhaps, it well-nigh broke his old heart to do so, he steadily refused either to see or receive a letter from his favourite son. Again and again did Alexis write to try to soften his father's unforgiving spirit, but as often were his letters returned unopened. This was the cross which Alexis Clerc found it heaviest to bear in all his life.

When, five years later, he was ordained priest, he wrote, and lovingly urged his father to come and be present at his first Mass. "I implore you to come," he wrote. "Do you not wish to come and behold the high honour to which God has raised me ? Having drawn me from the shame and abasement of sin, He has placed me among the princes of His people. . . . .

Come and adore our Lord Jesus Christ, present in my hands. . . . . Come and receive my first blessing, and behold the grandeur and majesty of a religion which, without lowering him, lets a father be blessed by his son. Once more, I implore you, my father, to complete my joy by being with me on this great and solemn occasion." But no! Though perhaps the refusal cost him as much pain as it cost his son, he refused to hear his son's first Mass.

So it went on to the end, and Alexis was never received back into his father's love. On December 30th, 1863, the old man died, without priest or sacraments, and without any apparent renouncement of his sceptical opinions. And yet, when he thought himself alone, he was heard to repeat the Our Father over and over again, dwelling earnestly on each several petition. This was all that Alexis had apparently gained by his prayers, and vigils and fastings.

It is almost impertinent for any biographer to try to peer into the studiously hidden life of Alexis Clerc's novitiate. There he found peace and joy of soul, and he, the man of the world, thirty-six years of age, the distinguished naval officer, and the sought-after friend and companion of all, became once more as a little child. "O happy time!" he exclaims. "I never imagined that I could have once more become so young with the young. How can I ever thank God enough for having given me such a beautiful vocation."

Fragments of the opinion held of him by those in whose company he made his noviciate have come down to us. His biographer says: "There is but one opinion on the subject of his gaiety and good temper, the wonderful charm of his manner, and the kindliness of his character. He was always, even in the world, remarkable for these natural qualities, which were now ennobled, purified, and perfected by grace." "Everybody," writes one who knew him intimately, "who sees him, feels at his ease with him at once, and feels his heart dilated in his company. We could not help loving him because he himself was so full of love."

When his two years of noviciate were ended, he was

sent, first to the College of Vaugirard and then to that of Sainte Geneviève, at which place he first met Father Ducoudray, who remained his companion and superior till the hour of his death. In these two colleges he spent the next eight years of his life in the work of tuition. His influence over the boys under his charge was wonderful and lasting; but in no case were its effects more marked and beneficial than among a class of little lads, pupils at Sainte Geneviève, and destined for the navy. To them Father Clerc devoted himself, being "moved by the recollection of the dangers which he had himself met with in the same career into which they, so young and innocent, and yet so totally devoid of experience, were about to be plunged." The love which these boys bore him was unbounded, and long, intimate letters from them, written either from their homes, or from on board ship, have been found. One of these boys wrote down in after life his recollections of Father Clerc. "As he was the first day I saw him, such was he to me ever after, just, simple and kind. We, 'his children,' as he called us, worshipped him. How well I remember our joy when he came into the playground, and how we clustered round him, all speaking at once, and each wanting an answer. He had to pretend to be quite angry, and threaten to leave the playground, before he could induce us to resume our games. Generally, however, he took the line of feigning immense interest in what we were doing, stirring us to incredible efforts to make the most brilliant of strokes, or perform impossible gymnastic feats. But one memorable time when we returned to school, we found that Father Clerc had left. There was general consternation, and many honest, bitter tears were shed. O Father Clerc, my dear, dear father," the writer continues, as he recalls the manner of his death, "was it thus that you were to crown your life of devotion and self-denial? How often you used to say to me: 'Later on, when I am no longer capable of bringing up boys to be good men and good Frenchmen, the dearest wish of my heart would be to be sent as missionary to China, to die for my God and His holy

Faith.' Who could have foretold that this his desire would be granted!"

Most of these boys, to whose training he devoted himself, and whom he influenced so wisely and lovingly, grew up to be men such as he wished and prayed they should be. Into all parts of the world they carried their faith, and showed by their practice a brilliant example to all around. There is also a list of names of these boys of his, grown up to be valiant men who, either fighting in the Naval Brigade, or as volunteers in the army, laid down their lives for their country in the German war, boldly confessing their God with their last breath.

After fifteen years of active work for souls, Father Clerc, in October, 1869, began his "third year of probation," preparatory to taking his final vows. Once more he was able to retire from the busy world, and lead a life of undisturbed prayer and mortification. One of those with whom he went through this time of probation gives us a glimpse of how he passed it. "It was granted to me to spend with him the year which preceded his glorious death," writes this eye-witness. "Nobody appreciated more than he did this favour which the Society grants to its sons. Many times he was heard to congratulate himself that 'an old fellow like him should be allowed to live such a year.' He was a pattern to all of us. In spite of his fifty years he had all the simplicity—I will even say the grace and charm—of a child. Child-like, he asked most exactly for every little permission prescribed by the rule. But nothing was little in his eyes. Perhaps he foresaw that by this constant mortification in little things he was preparing himself for greater things—even the apostolate and martyrdom."

While he was leading this holy life of retreat, his country was on the very verge of the most terrible experiences, and before his year of probation was over, the France which Father Clerc loved so dearly was plunged into the agony and disgrace of the German war. The enemy laid siege to Paris, and he was torn prematurely from his retreat to take charge of the ambulance

established in the college of Vaugirard, where he remained till the capitulation of the city.

His labours among the wounded and dying during that time form one of the finest episodes of his life. After he had said his Mass at break of day, he devoted himself entirely to his dear wounded, attending to their wants, both spiritual and temporal, and preparing for death those whom he could not cure. He nursed the poor injured men with wonderful tenderness, feeding the helpless with his own hands, and performing the most revolting offices for them. "You do not know how good Father Clerc is," cried one of these poor mutilated men, whom he had tended lovingly and finally persuaded to make his peace with God. "He has done things for me that my own father would have refused to do; O if you only knew how I love him!" He did not wait for the wounded to be brought to him; but went to the scene of battle and rescued the dying under the hottest fire, never dreaming of fear for his own safety. One day he was missed, and found sitting calmly on a stone, saying his office, with the roar of battle going on around him, and bullets flying in every direction. He gave no thought to himself during those severe and cold months of siege, refusing to himself necessary food, or even the warmth of a fire.

His companions knew at the time that his life and charity were heroic, but afterwards, in the light of later events, they reproached themselves for not having more carefully noted his words and deeds. "We had no notion that he was chosen by God to die for Him," writes one, "and we did not pay sufficient attention to his actions, or comprehend how full of self-denial they were. He was so humble that he always found the means of doing the most heroic things unperceived."

The siege was over: peace with Prussia was signed on March 1st, 1871, and Paris was left to recover from her humiliation. During the lull between the horrors of war and the worse horrors which followed, Father Clerc, after an eight days' retreat, took his final vows on March 19th. Even then the terrors of the Commune were beginning, and his friends who assembled to witness his

profession had difficulty in making their way back to their homes through the disorderly streets. Father Clerc, with the prophetic eye with which he was so often gifted, foresaw all the worse evils which followed. He grasped the whole misery of the situation: the lawlessness of the populace, the want of discipline among the soldiers, the weakness of the Government, and the want of purpose among even the best. "There is nothing left but to die," he said sadly; "there is no room here for honest people." And again: "I fear for Paris; she will have to be purified by blood." In a very few days his forebodings were realized: and the Socialist faction, being joined by most of the National Guards, drove the Republican troops out of the city, and planted the red flag on the Hotel de Ville.

It was on April the 4th, and Tuesday in Holy Week, between midnight and one in the morning, that the College of Sainte Geneviève was surrounded by National Guards clamouring for admission. Father Ducoudray, the superior, seeing by the attitude of the invaders that resistance was useless, opened the gates to them. In a moment they were scattered over the house, ransacking everything under pretext of searching for arms. They broke open the safe, but finding nothing whereon to glut their avarice, the plunderers vented their rage and disappointment on the persons of the inmates of the house. FF. Ducoudray, Clerc, de Bengy, and five other priests, besides four brothers and seven servants, were seized as so-called hostages, and marched off in the middle of the night to the Préfecture of Police. When, on their way there, they reached the middle of the Pont Saint Michel, Father Ducoudray turned to his companions with a joyful countenance, saying: "*Ibant gaudentes.* Is it not so with us?" a phrase which considerably puzzled the captors, and in which they studiously sought to discover some hidden hostile meaning.

After an insulting examination at the Préfecture, they were cast into the common prison. Father Ducoudray, with the choice of one companion, was considered dangerous enough to be confined separately. His choice fell

on Father Clerc who, as may be supposed, gladly accepted the post, not knowing, and not caring, that the choice probably marked him out as a special object of hatred to the anarchists. The gaoler, who had been charged to discover anything about the prisoners that might be punishable, could only report that "they want nothing; they are cheerful, and appear to be very happy. They pray together almost continuously."

After two days, three of the Jesuits, FF. Ducoudray, Clerc, and de Bengy, were removed to the prison of Mazas, in company with the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Darboy, who had also been seized as a hostage, and President Bonjean. It was strange for the latter, the staunchest of Gallicans and a hater of Jesuits, to be found in such company. A few days later, FF. Olivaint and Caubert, who had been seized at the house in the Rue de Sèvres, were added to the number. The other members of the community, arrested with Father Ducoudray on April 4th, were released after an imprisonment of nine days.

At Mazas, each prisoner was confined in a solitary cell; and for each one there began a veritable and last retreat. When Father Clerc was led into his prison, he kissed its bare and dismal walls, crying out with St Andrew: "O crux, O bona crux!"

In this solitary cell he led, as far as he could without Mass or Sacraments, a truly religous life. At the time that he was arrested he had been occupied in preparing a course of higher mathematics for a class of students, and this work he now tranquilly resumed, devoting himself to his work as faithfully as if he were unconscious of his probable fate, or indifferent to the roar of cannon on every side of him. For the Government at Versailles had collected what scattered remnants of the French army it could, and had placed it under the command of Marshal MacMahon, with the task of subduing the Communists: and now Paris was going through the horrors of a second siege at the hands of her own children.

Father Clerc was able for a time to communicate freely by letter with his brother Jules, and to receive under supervision whatever articles he requested him to send.

By this means he obtained the necessary materials for his mathematical studies, as well as a Bible and a breviary. Last, but not least, he received a copy of his beloved *Summa*—that book from which he first learnt his faith, and which was now to be his constant companion until the day when he sealed that faith with his blood.

"I want for nothing," he writes to Jules from his solitary confinement, "except, of course, Mass. I pray, I study, I read, and I write a little; and I find that time flies even at Mazas. . . . . Do not run any risk by trying to see me. These gates will be opened by other hands than yours. Even if they never open, I am quite ready to resign myself. I am happy and proud to suffer something for the name I bear." He exulted at the prospect of what he considered to be veritable martyrdom; for he was convinced that all that he and his fellow hostages suffered was caused by "hatred of the Faith, and hatred of Jesus Christ," and by nothing else.

But however peaceful, resigned, and even joyful Father Clerc and his fellow prisoners were, there was one want they had which none could satisfy but Him, the loss of Whom caused the want. The want was satisfied, for it was not our Blessed Lord's will that His faithful servants should fight their last fight for Him without that supreme aid which He instituted for His followers. After much correspondence, veiled in the most careful language, in which every most minute direction was given and understood, the Jesuit fathers in Paris undertook to have the Blessed Sacrament conveyed to their imprisoned brethren. It was arranged that the captives were to express a great wish for some cream, and that the gaolers were to be bribed to allow their friends to gratify this apparently harmless wish. Each pot of cream thus successfully conveyed to them had to it a double bottom hermetically sealed in which were laid four consecrated Hosts, wrapped in a corporal, as well as a silk bag to hang round the neck.

From that moment, life was indeed changed within those prison cells.

"O prison, dear prison, whose walls I kissed, saying, 'Bona crux,' how precious you are," writes Father Clerc.

"You are no longer a prison, but a chapel. You are not even a solitude, for I am not alone. My Saviour, my King, my Master, and my God dwells here with me. May my captivity last for ever, which procures for me the joy of carrying my Lord on my heart, no longer in symbol but in reality."

On the 22nd of May, the captives were removed to La Roquette, the prison for condemned felons. In such a hurry were their captors to consign them to this last abode, that nothing had been made ready to receive them, and they were kept for hours in a large waiting-room. A characteristic scene took place during this delay. Abbé Duguerry, the aged Curé of the Madeleine, had been added to the number of the prisoners, and during the hours of waiting, he addressed the Archbishop as "my lord." One of the guards silenced him brutally, saying there were no longer any 'lords.' On hearing his words, Father Clerc promptly rose from the bench on which he was seated, and kneeling on both knees before Monseigneur Darboy, he kissed his hand and asked him for his blessing.

At La Roquette the confinement of the prisoners was no longer solitary. Twice each day they met for exercise in the court, and were able, unobserved and unhindered, to make their confessions to each other. Moreover, the cells were separated by mere lathe and plaster divisions, and each two cells communicated at the window which was common to both, and at which the inmates could not only speak together, but also see each other. Father Clerc's neighbour was President Bonjean, the old Gallican, who, on the brink of the grave, put aside his prejudices and was prepared for death by his Jesuit fellow prisoner. "Well, my lord," he said gaily to the Archbishop, "who would have believed that I, the Gallican, would have let myself be converted by a Jesuit!"

On the 24th of May, the Communists, who knew that they could not long resist the force of the besieging army, which was fast hemming them into an ever-narrowing circle, were driven to a state of frenzy by the sense of despair. Led on by the horrible women of the

populace, who, outdoing the men in the fiendishness of their cruelty and hatred, have ever been to the fore in the bloody horrors which have been enacted during the last hundred years within the walls of Paris, the anarchists poured petroleum over the grandest buildings in the city, and set fire to them. The Tuilleries, the Palais Royal, the Hotel de Ville, and other monuments of history, were in flames. Maddened by the sight, the army under MacMahon redoubled its efforts, and entered the heart of the city in time to save Notre Dame and the Louvre, which had been already kindled. Step by step the army of rescue fought its way till the Communists were driven into the one quarter of Père La Chaise—and those chosen men within the walls of La Roquette knew that their hour was come.

Maddened by panic and fury, the Communists intended to massacre all the hostages, some sixty in number, but the mayor, who still possessed something like a human heart, persuaded them to be content with decimating them. The mob consented on condition that those selected should be priests.

It was eight in the evening when a roar and clamour of unmistakable import were heard outside the prison gates, and then a mob of men, women, and even children burst in. The leader of the band, with some show of authority, demanded that six of the prisoners should be given up; and as the fatal list was called out, the doors of the cells of those condemned were thrown open, and the Archbishop, M. Duguerry, M. Allard, and FF. Ducoudray and Clerc stepped into the passage. President Bonjean was the sixth, his name being for some unknown reason included by those who had declared their intention of slaking their thirst for blood on that of priests alone.

But little more is known. The remaining prisoners, gazing out of their cell windows, strained their eyes in the dusk to see what they could. They described how the Jesuit fathers, one on either side, supported the old Curé of the Madeleine, who, worn out with age and fatigue, could not, unaided, keep pace with his murderers. The very last thing seen, before the doomed band disap-

peared behind the last angle of the wall, was Father Clerc throwing open his cassock, and, as it were, presenting his heart to the bullets of the murderers.

When they could no longer see, those left behind knelt and prayed and listened, till the sound of an irregular discharge of musketry told them that heaven had opened its gates to their friends.

FF. Olivaint, Caubert, and De Bengy were not kept waiting long. On the 26th of May, they, with the remaining hostages, priests and soldiers, were massacred wholesale by the Communists as a sort of dying act of frenzy before MacMahon's troops swept through the city, cutting down the insurgents without mercy, sparing neither man nor woman in their vengeance.

When all was over, and the horrible Commune was quenched in blood, the Jesuit fathers sought and found the bodies of their five martyred brethren among a heap of dead who had been cast into a common grave. They were laid in the chapel of the Japanese Martyrs in the church in the Rue de Sèvres. There they still lie, and an inscription over each tells how and why he died. "He willingly sealed his faith with his blood," is written over the body of Alexis Clerc. It was but fitting that he who so willingly gave up all to follow our Lord in life, should have equally willingly died for Him.

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